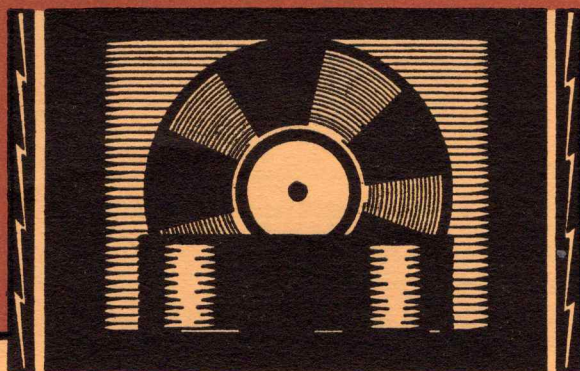


The

JANUARY, 1938

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AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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The American Music Lover

A MUSICAL CONNOISSEUR'S MAGAZINE

JANUARY
1938

Volume III, No. 9

Toscanini Returns

An Editorial Note

ARTURO TOSCANINI'S first concert with the newly formed NBC-Symphony Orchestra (Christmas Night) was a strong argument for a definitive recording of Mozart's *G minor Symphony*. For the Italian maestro's performance of this work was beautifully accomplished, with admirable precision, rhythmic assurance and a delicacy and sparkle that is all too seldom encountered. If the Victor people are wise they will make Toscanini's initial symphonic offering a first recording with the new orchestra, for no one gives this music such an affectionate and revelatory exposition.

It is too early to comment extensively on the Toscanini concerts, other than to say their importance cannot be minimized; for the advent of this new radio symphony with a conductor of his magnitude at the helm may well augur a complete change in the status of symphony orchestras in this country. The radio studio and the concert hall may be combined in a short time and the major symphony concerts planned usually for local audiences may be planned instead for hearers in all parts of the nation.

The lack of ostentation in connection with the first broadcast was most welcome. In the hall, it was of interest to note the absence of an announcer. On the air, the announcer was there of course, but his prepared speech was not over long nor written in a manner to detract from the enjoyment of the music. As he read his comments in the short intermission, while the maestro changed his clothes, one was conscious on the air that he was watching for the conductor's return, and that Toscanini's music-making was considered far more important than any commentary on the music.

Assistant Editors
NATHAN BRODER
PHILIP MILLER

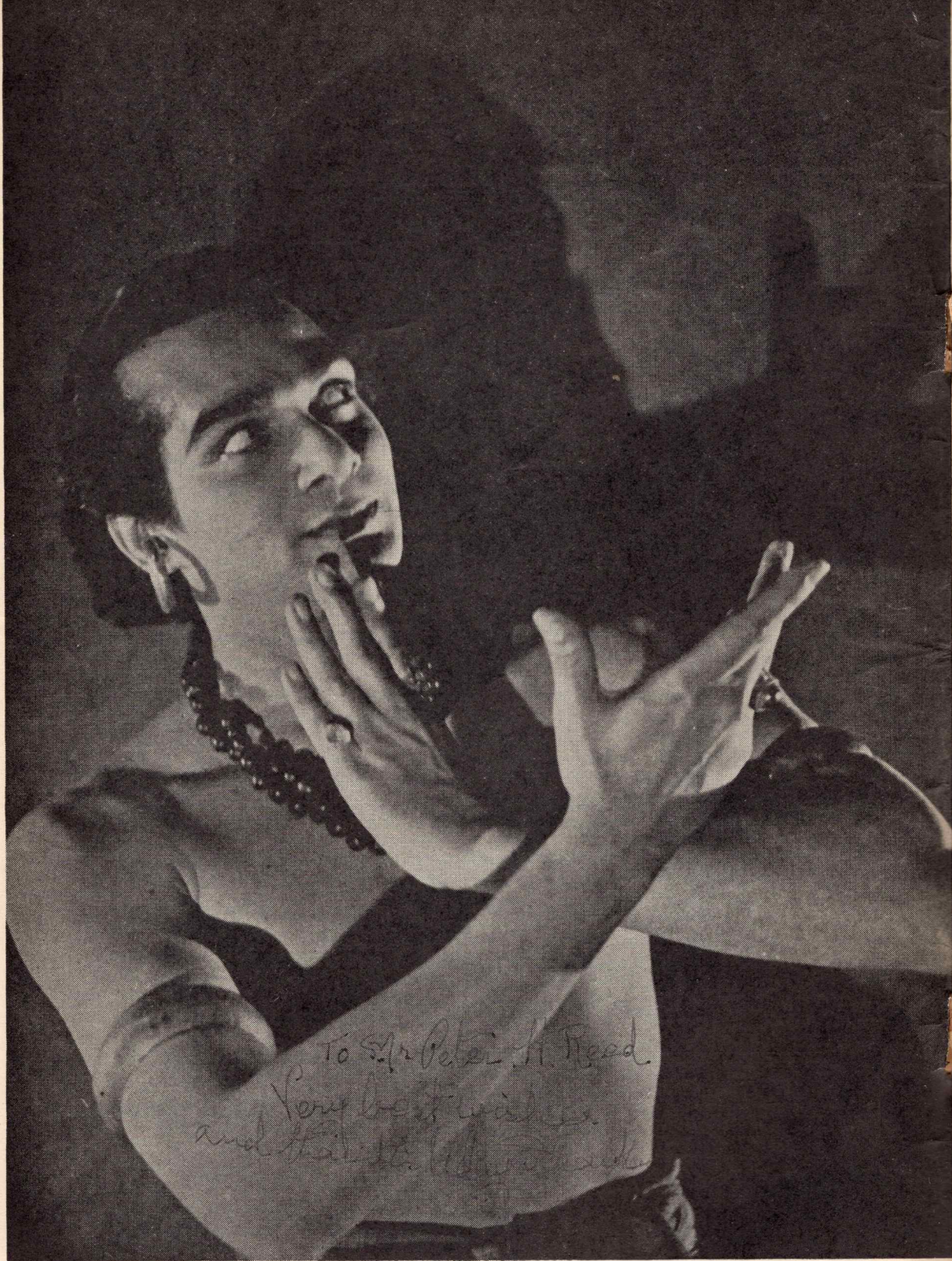
PETER HUGH REED
Editor and Publisher

Associate Editors
WILLIAM KOZLENKO
A. P. DEWEESE

PAUL GIRARD
Circulation Manager

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To Mr Peter H. Reed
Very best wishes
and that the future
will be bright

Uday Shan-Kar

The Music of Uday Shan-Kar's Hindu Ballet*

By BASANTA KOOMAR ROY

Author of "Rabindranath Tagore: The Man and His Poetry"

I

EVER since the passing away of Anna Pavlowa, Uday Shan-Kar is universally acclaimed as the greatest dancer on earth today. In the phenomenal success of his art, Uday Shan-Kar owes a great debt of gratitude to the music of his orchestra so sensitively arranged by his music director, Vishnudass Shirali; and which is so soulfully played by Rabindra, Dulal Sen, Sisir Sovan, Nagen Dey, Brijo Behari and Shirali himself.

The haunting music of his orchestra is a part of the life and soul of Shan-Kar. For years Shan-Kar has stubbornly refused to separate this music from the dances of his company. The authorities of RCA Victor Company have at last most fortunately succeeded in capturing ten musical numbers of Shan-Kar's orchestra for the Victor Records. These Victor Records will thus ever remain as an artistic heritage of mankind for ages to come; and countless homes in all corners of the world will be blessed with the benediction of the supreme beauty of this music of India.

Every Hindu recognizes the divinity of music; and the gods and the goddesses of the Hindu pantheon are the custodians of music. According to Hindu scriptures *Brahma* is the creator of the universe. He is also known as the father of music. "All songs," says a Hindu Sacred Book, "are a part of Him who wears a form of sound." From *Nada* (sound) emanated *Sruti* (time units or musical syllables); from *Sruti* grew *Swara* (tone); from *Swara* was formed *Raga* (melody scale); and from *Raga* was created *Gita* (music).

The Hindu scale of music, like the Western scale, has seven notes to the octave. These originated from the calls of various birds and animals: thus *Saraj* is from the intona-

tion of the call of the peacock; *Rishab* from the bird *papeea* (skylark); *Gandhara* from the lowing of sheep; *Madhyama* from the bird called *Koolunga*; *Panchama* from the cuckoo; *Dhaivata* from the horse; and *Nishada* from the elephant. In *Swarasadhana* (solfeccio) these notes are known by their first syllables — sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni, exactly corresponding to do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, the seven notes of the Western musical scale.

The European scale is composed of twelve tones and semi-tones, whereas the Hindu divides his scale into twenty-two quarter tones, and the third of a tone. Each of these twenty-two musical syllables is called a *Sruti*.

As in Sanskrit grammar, it takes at least sixteen years of hard study for an efficient student thoroughly to master the intricacies of Hindu music. The great masters of music in India will never teach for money. They adopt exceptionally talented students as their disciples. The Seven Laws of Music which a student must master before he is allowed to perform before the public are: (1) *Sur-addhya*, the law of tones; (2) *Raga-addhya*, the law of melodies and tunes; (3) *Tal-addhya*, the law of time; (4) *Astra-addhya*, the law of musical instruments; (5) *Nrit-addhya*, the law of dancing; (6) *Bhav-addhya*, the law of rhythm and gestures; and (7) *Arth-addhya*, the law of understanding the meaning of songs.

Originally the music of India had 16,000 tunes and 360 *talas* or time measures. Later they were reduced to six principal *Ragas* (male tunes) and thirty-six *Raginees* (female tunes, the wives of the *Ragas*). And the 360 *talas* were reduced to 92. Out of the mating of the *Ragas* and the *Raginees* we have now hundreds of their musical children. The word *Raga* (melody scale) is derived from the Sanskrit word *Ranj* — to color — to dye: hence, the musical moods that color our lives.

*This article is also included with Victor Set M-382.

Quite like the male and the female musicians, these Ragas and the Raginees are exceedingly temperamental. They have their appointed seasons of the year, and their definite hours of the day for propitiation. Thus the soul of music psychologically harmonizes with the soul of the season and the mood of the hour of the day.

The six principal Ragas are *Bhairav*, *Malkounsa*, *Hindol*, *Deepak*, *Shri*, and *Megh Mallar*. The Ragas and the Raginees seek to represent the nine classifications of feeling—amatory, humorous, heroic, harmonious, pathetic, wondrous, wrathful, terrifying and disgusting.

Though the formal music of India is at least six thousand years old, it has developed no harmony. It is purely melodic. From a higher point of view, however, there can be no melody without harmony; as there can be no harmony without melody. In fact the musical mystic hears a million harmonic notes in one bar of melodic music.

Great musicians are held in the highest esteem in India. They are worthily supported by the wealthy of the land by gifts of rent-free lands or other presents. But the musicians sing and play for the appreciative public free of charge. Even the Rajas and Maharajas bow to the musicians in reverence.

II

Altogether about one hundred different musical instruments are used in Shan-Kar's Orchestra for the numerous dance and musical numbers of his company. The principal instruments used in the music of these records are:

SARODE

The Sarode belongs to the Veena family; and is one of the most highly evolved of all string instruments. It is carved out of a single block of wood. The lower round belly is covered with sensitively prepared parchment. The upper part of its narrowing body is covered with a metal plate. There are no frets on this metal plate. The Sarode has six metal or gut strings. It has numerous auxiliary strings for sympathetic vibrations and variations in a subtle form of gliding music.

Music is produced by plucking the strings near the ivory bridge on the parchment with an ivory or cocoanut shell plectrum. The strings are pressed against the metal plate by the fingers of the left hand to produce higher or lower notes. The voluminous sonority of this instrument is enriched by a big hollow gourd shell at the upper end which acts as a resonator.

SITAR

The invention of the Sitar is attributed to Amir Khusru, the famous poet and musician of the Court of Sultan Ala-Uddin-Khiliji of Delhi, India (1295-1315). The very name of the instrument implies that it is a seven-stringed instrument. The strings are made of metal. The belly is made of seasoned gourd-shell or resonant wood. The body is about two feet long with a finger board about three inches wide. There are sixteen to eighteen steel or brass frets on the finger board. The Sitar is played by means of a wire plectrum on the forefinger of the right hand, plucking the strings near the belly while the strings are stopped by pressing down the fingers of the left hand upon the frets.

ESRAJ

The Esraj is a string instrument, and is played with a bow. The belly is covered with parchment. The body is like that of a Sitar with movable frets. The strings lie on the frets. The musician adjusts the frets according to the tune he wants to play. There are quite a few sympathetic strings.

TANPURA

The Tanpura is the most essential and the most popular of all string instruments in India. It looks like the Sitar, but is much larger in size. It has four strings — three of steel and one of brass. The belly is made of *Kathal* wood, or seasoned gourd-shell. The bridge is made of ivory or wood. Small pieces of silk are placed between the bridge and the strings in order to increase the buzzing quality of this instrument. The strings pass through holes in a ledge placed near the pegs. The strings have beads near their attachments to help in perfect tuning.

The Tanpura is played with fingers without any plectrum. The strings are never stopped, but are gently pulled one after another, from the highest to the lowest.

SARANGA

The Saranga is only an enlarged form of the Sarangi. The Sarangi is an instrument the music of which comes closest to the human voice. The Saranga is carved out of a huge piece of *Shishoo* wood. It has four main strings — three of gut and one of brass. Under these four main strings there are numerous sympathetic strings. The belly is covered with parchment.

It is played with a bow. The strings are stopped by pressing the fingers against their side, and not by placing the fingers upon them. The Sarangi is principally played when the professional Nautch girls of India



Shan-Kar and his Company in Danse Rasa Leela

dance and sing. The Saranga, however, serves as the contrabass in the orchestra of India.

SHANKHA

The Shankha is a conch-shell. It is the oldest wind instrument known in India. The ancient Hindu scriptures mention its music; and the most ancient of Hindu arts depict it as a musical instrument used both in war and in religious ceremonies.

FLUTE

Banshi is the name for the flute in India. The flute is most devoutly associated with Lord Krishna — the Lord Christ of the Hindus. His words of wisdom in *The Bhagavat Gita* (The Song Celestial) constitute the Bible of the Hindus.

MRIDUNGA

The Mridunga is the oldest of all drums in India. And strange as it may seem, this oldest is also the most powerful. It is claimed that Brahma himself created this instrument. It was first used by the god Ganesha, the Hindu god of good luck, to accompany the great god Shiva in his cosmic dance celebrating his own victory over the mighty demon Tripurasura. It is made of *gambhar*,

panash or red sandal wood; and wooden pegs are used for perfect tuning. In order to enhance the resonance, black discs are made on the parchments at both ends. The paste for these disks is made from a mixture of ashes, manganese dust, boiled rice, *gub* fruit, and tamarind juice. The Mridunga is played with the fingers and the hands.

TABLA, BANYA

The Tabla and Banya are the two friendly drums of India that are played together by the same musician to produce time beats of different melodies. The Tabla is played by the right hand; and the Banya by the left. The Tabla is made from *nim*, *khair* or *bijai* wood. The Banya is made from burnt clay or copper.

Like the Mridunga, the Tabla has wooden pegs for most delicate tuning. On the parchments of both the Tabla and the Banya black disks are glued for the enrichment of resonance. The paste for this black disk is made from mixing in certain proportions iron filings, manganese dioxide and boiled rice.

The Tabla is the tenor; the Banya is the bass.

KHOL

The Khol is a kind of India's endless varieties of drums. Its body is made of burnt clay and is reinforced with thin strips of goat or buffalo hide. Unlike the Mridunga, the two parchment ends of the Khol are of the same size, and very small — about five inches in diameter. It is played with the fingers and the hands; and is generally used in religious music festivals.

JALA-TARANGA

The word Jala means water; and the word Taranga means waves. Perhaps the best explanation of the name of this musical instrument would be the waves of music on bowls of water. There are twelve porcelain bowls of diverse sizes varying filled with water. The edges of these bowls are beaten with two small sticks to produce different melodies as the musician desires. Usually the Tabla-Banya softly accompanies the Jala-Taranga to create a dream in rhythm.

III

Like his daily worship, music is primarily individualistic with the Hindu. So for ages the orchestra was practically unknown to the supremely music-loving people of India. It was only about sixty years ago that Raja Sir Sourindra Mohun Tagore of the illustrious Tagore family of Calcutta organized an orchestra of various musical instruments of India. Different theatres and amateur musical clubs took up the idea and crudely mutilated Raja Sir Sourindra Mohun Tagore's prophetic vision of an orchestra for the music of India.

In 1930 Uday Shan-Kar, and Miss Alice Boner, the Swiss sculptress and a true friend of India, went to India from Paris to organize a worthy company of India's dancers and musicians. It was then that Uday Shan-Kar, in cooperation with Timir Baran Bhattacharjee, the celebrated musician of Calcutta, organized a splendid orchestra. At present Shan-Kar's orchestra is under the leadership of Vishnudass Shirali of Bombay. Shirali studied music with Vishnu Digambar without paying a penny for his board, room and tuition. He is a *Sangeet Praveen*, Master of Music. "Vishnudass Shirali," writes *Musical America* of New York, "is a master drummer, and a distinguished musician according to any standards." He has reverently arranged the music of Shan-Kar's Orchestra, and has indeed succeeded in rhyming the music with the dances created by the supreme genius of Uday Shan-Kar himself.

The enchanting music of the Victor Records will no doubt considerably pave the

path for peace and brotherhood between the East and West. They comprise the following selections:

RAGA TILANGA (Record 14506-A)

Raga Tilanga is a classical orchestral prelude. The "Tala" or timing is "Tritala" — a bar of sixteen beats. It is played by Vishnudass Shirali, Sisir Sovan, Rabindra, Dulal Sen, Nagen Dey and Brij Behari.

This Raga is a lesson in tranquility of mind. The call of the flute and the whispering of the drums in this record constantly remind you of the cross-currents of human passions and emotions that retard the onward march of the soul. This comforting music is like a call from above to break away from the unreal and to dedicate one's self to the real.

RAGA BAHAR (Record 14506-B)

This, too, is an orchestral number which is used as a musical prelude by the Shan-Kar Company. This is a springtime tune. Ecstatic joy is in the air, and there is the rapturously ravishing madness of love in the human heart. The intensity of this Spring rhapsody makes one feel as if the creator of love is playing hide and seek with love itself.

The "Tala" or timing of this Raga is "Tritala" — a bar of sixteen beats. This number is played by Vishnudass Shirali, Sisir Sovan, Nagen Dey, Brij Behari, Rabindra and Dulal Sen.

DANSE GANDHARVA (Record 14507-A)

The Gandharvas are the celestial musicians and dancers at the court of Indra, the Vedic Lord of the skies. This is a solo dance for Uday Shan-Kar. The name of this tune is Raga Malkounsa; and it is played by Vishnudass Shirali, Dulal Sen, Rabindra, and Brij Behari.

Raga Malkounsa is one of the greatest and loveliest Ragas in all the music of India. Shan-Kar is exceedingly fond of this tune.

DANSE RAMCHANDRA (Record 14507-B)

Ramchandra was the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Raja Ramchandra was an ideal King. The Ramayana, India's great epic, narrates the story of the nobility of this beloved king of about 4000 B. C.

The whole world affectionately speaks of the singular grace of Simkie, the charming dancing partner of the illustrious Uday Shan-Kar. In this solo ritual dance Simkie dances as the members of the orchestra sing two devotional songs to Ramchandra, and play the two Ragas of Sinhendra — Maddhyama and Hansadhwani. The first song is in a bar of seven beats (Rupaka), and the second is in a bar of four beats (Aditala). The music is

sung and played by Vishnudass Shirali, Brijō Behari, Nagen Dey, Sisir Sovan, Dulal Sen and Rabindra.

The first song awakens the somnolent spirit through rites and rituals and simplicity of feeling.

After a moment's pause and an upward movement of Simkie's body the second song begins. The devotional ecstasy of the music deepens into a superconscious self-forgetfulness and a serene surrender of the soul to the ideals of the object of worship.

TABLA-TARANGA (Record 14508-A)

Tabla-Taranga, as played by Vishnudass Shirali, is almost a musical miracle. It is certainly a rare musical experience for both the eyes and the ears to see and to hear. Shirali plays on so many Tablas (drums) at the same time. This favorite musical disciple of Professor Vishnu Digambar sits inside a semi-circle formed by twelve Tablas; and he strikes the tune of Raga Mishra-Adana. Each of these twelve drums is tuned to a different pitch.

From drum to drum the magic fingers of Shirali travel with uncanny swiftness, and with the grace of seagulls on wings his fingers glide over the keyboard of the drums with dramatic dignity to raise waves of music on the ocean of these Tablas.

DANSE KARTIKEYYA (Record 14508-B)

Danse Kartikeyya is one of Uday Shan-Kar's most famous solo dances. The Raga is Malkounsa; and it is played by Vishnudass Shirali, Sisir Sovan, Rabindra, Nagen Dey, Dulal Sen and Brijō Behari. The "Tala" or timing is "Tritala" a bar of sixteen beats.

Kartikeyya is the Hindu god of male beauty and war. This handsome and heroic son of Shiva, before going to kill the Demon Taraka, comes to make obeisance to his parents. Kartikeyya then summons his chariot and rides away at the head of his army to the region where Taraka dwells. With confidence born of strength and a smile of scorn he challenges Taraka.

In this number, Uday Shan-Kar, the inspired prophet of the dance, becomes doubly inspired. Danse Kartikeyya is the perfect blossoming of a dance-flower. Each petal reveals a newer world of the dance; and the flower itself a newer world of beauty.

DANSE INDRA (Record 1834-A)

Danse Indra is Uday Shan-Kar's much admired solo dance. He can scarcely dance this number without being forced into dancing an encore by the frantically insistant applause of excited audiences.

The melody is the celestial music of Raga Bhairav. The "Tala" or timing is "Dadara"

Shirali, Hindu composer and arranger of Shan-Kar's music (on left) with other musicians



— a bar of three beats. It is played by Vishnudass Shirali, Sisir Sovan, Rabindra, Nagen Dey, Dulal Sen and Brijoh Behari.

According to the Vedic traditions Indra is the god of the heavens, the stars, the clouds, the thunder, the lightning, and the rains. As the supreme god, he is here represented in the act of initiating the lesser gods in the perfect art of dancing. The orchestra indeed sings songs of Indra's wondrous heavens in the skies above.

RAGA MISHRA-KAPHI (Record 1834-B)

This is a variation and improvisation on a theme. The sentiment is gay. The "Tala" or timing is "Druta-Tritala" — a bar of eight beats. Dulal Sen plays the Sarode, Rabindra, the talented brother of Uday Shan-Kar, the Esraj, and Sisir Sovan the Tabla-Banya. This number is generally used as a musical interlude.

From the very beginning these exceptionally gifted young musicians, in an intoxication of beauty, pour forth an aggressively jubilant music of a volcanic character. The nuances of this melody are singularly sweet. To listen to this music is to forget all sadness.

DANSE SNANUM (Record 1835-A)

Three young girls, while gathering flowers, are troubled by bees. They are bathing and

are suddenly frightened away by the sound of approaching footsteps. This fascinating rhythmic painting is danced by Simkie, Zohra and Uzra. The music is Ragas Durga and Khamaj. The "Tala" or timing is "Tritala" — in two speeds, in bars of sixteen and eight beats. This ravishing music is played by Vishnudass Shirali, Sisir Sovan, Rabindra, Dulal Sen, Nagen Dey and Brijoh Behari.

The unique enchantment of this music is absorbing beyond words. It makes one feel as if a panorama of happiness is swimming in a sea of joyous music. In India we believe that music never dies, that it ever materializes into beautiful forms. The melody here seems actually to gather form in the movements of the three girl dancers.

BHAJANA (Record 1835-B)

Bhajana is a religious and popular song of Northern India. It is a simple rhythm of four beats to a bar. The song is sung by Vishnudass Shirali. The orchestral accompaniment is played by Rabindra, Dulal Sen, Nagen Dey, Sisir Sovan and Brijoh Behari.

This is a hymn to Lord Krishna. In the soothing serenity of the song one feels the healing tranquility of a Hindu hermitage; and in the insistent music of the flute one hears the call of the flute of Krishna to conquer all selfishness in order to be worthy of entering the Kingdom of the Soul.

Some American Folk Songs

By HERBERT HALPERT

GOOD news for people who like songs and wish they had some to sing! Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag*, for ten years obtainable only in two high-priced editions, can now be had for \$1.89 (Harcourt, Brace, New York.) It's a well-packed bag with nearly 300 songs and it's a big book — big in the way America's big. No other anthology or collection of songs combines the sweep of area and variety of tone. Everything is in it. Ballads imported by the early British settlers but Americanized after centuries in the southern highlands; songs that went West with the pioneers and trail-breakers; Spanish melodies from the Southwest; the shanties of the sailors;

songs of cowboys, lumberjacks, railroadmen and miners — all of them.

We could say that the groups mentioned, together with the rich negro spirituals included, are the best known types of American folk songs. But Carl Sandburg from his vast experience of the country goes farther. He includes "blues" songs of bad-men, minstrel songs that have gone into folk tradition, songs of the circus and the patent medicine wagons. Even the comic songs popular in colleges, songs that have a horrible fascination of their own, are present, and very quietly, with no fuss about it, there are a number of first class bawdy tunes — the kind that are sung over the entire country.

Not all of the songs are outstanding. There are better versions of ballads than some included here. There are no Creole songs. There are — but what's the use of carping at minor details? It'll be a hard job for any collection to surpass it. One imitator has failed already. It's not always a glad book. Many songs are included that deal with the unfairness of man to his fellow man. It's not strictly a collection of original material. Many of the songs have appeared before in scholarly collections. It is to Sandburg's credit that he has chosen so wisely from sources which most people would never locate.

However, Carl Sandburg is more than just a collector. He is noted for the singing of folk songs on the lecture platform which he does after readings of his own poems. That there was at least one excellent record made by him I discovered while preparing the article on folk songs that I wrote last year for the *American Music Lover*. This record (Victor 20135) contains three spirituals and the stirring negro "ballit" of *The Boll Weevil*. The latter deals dramatically with the devastating advent of the boll weevil in the cotton fields of the South, and has one of the few recorded protests of the poor farmer against the injustice of the system that holds him down:

De farmer says to de merchant:
 "We ain't made but only one bale,
 And befoh we'll give yo' dat one
 we'll fight and go to jail,
 We'll have a home, we'll have a
 home."

Sandburg is always effective in his singing of songs against oppression. There should be a recording of his interpretation of the magnificent song of *The Buffalo Skinners* who, when the contractor refused to pay them:

We coaxed him and we pleaded,
 We found it was no go —
 We left old Crego's bones to bleach
 On the range of the buffalo.

and he should record the heartbreaking Bahaman song which they call *H'ist Up Duh John B. Sails* with the line:

"I feel so break-up I want to go
 home!"

I think it would be splendid if someone could get Mr. Sandburg to record the many phases of American life in a group of songs. *The Friends of Recorded Music* announced its intention of doing so when it was first formed, but I am given to understand that those plans had to be abandoned.*

In a previous article we discussed the popular publication of harmonized folksongs. A folksong enthusiast never admits that the addition of an accompaniment makes a collection more desirable, though he grants it is certainly more fitted for popular reception than the dull volumes that come expensively from the university presses. Musical collections at least treat the songs as singable — not as so many texts with the music appended as an afterthought. As we have said before, a dichotomy should not exist between popular availability and value for study. To make a popular volume that would not sacrifice scholarly usefulness requires experimentation ordinarily prohibited by the price of music printing. Therefore, many small collections of folk song stay filed away in manuscript.

A new and exciting possibility, and one in which we are pleased to have had a share, is presented by the National Service Bureau of the Federal Theatre Project. This organization has issued an important collection of forty-five unaccompanied folk songs from Mississippi in a splendidly mimeographed volume.** What makes this news exciting is not merely the book's low price of twenty-five cents (to cover the cost of materials only) nor even the fact that the government is at last showing some practical interest in the problem of preserving our folk song heritage. What is remarkable is that this volume, along with a bunch of fine tunes, has the temerity to offer an introduction and appendix by a musicologist and is a serious attempt to make a *musical*, not a literary, classification of folk tunes.

The texts of many, though not all of these tunes appeared in Arthur Palmer Hudson's *Folksongs From Mississippi and Their Background* (University of North Carolina Press). Mainly for reasons of economy the tunes did not appear. The Music Research Department of the National Service Bureau took the opportunity of getting the tunes from Professor Hudson and having Dr. George Herzog edit them. An innovation which may well set the standard for future musical collections is that of fitting all the words of the songs under the notes. This serves to show very

*Since this article was written Musicraft has issued an album of eight songs made by Mr. Sandburg. This album is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

**Folk Tunes From Mississippi by A. P. Hudson and G. Herzog. National Service Bureau, 1697 Broadway, New York City. Price: 25 cents.

clearly a relation between text and tune which is not always the expected one.

Dr. Herzog's system of classification follows the procedure employed by Finnish and Hungarian collectors and scholars in which the melodies are "placed in order according to the tones at the end of their phrases." Dr. Herzog does not feel that classification aims at more than an attempt to discover types. Nor does he claim that this system is one that will prove completely adequate for American folk song. As he says, "It is offered as an illustration of the type of experimentation that must be done before a generally acceptable system can be evolved." And certain general conclusions he draws are worth much interested attention. There is great need for a series like this one which can serve both as an outlet for folk songs and a medium for testing ideas. I strongly urge support of this enterprise by purchase of this valuable collection.

Mellinger Edward Henry's *A Bibliography For the Study of American Folk-Song*† issued in a limited edition, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, seems a bit premature. The book, as its author admits, "is not a scien-

tific bibliography. No effort has been made to list separately authors or editors and subject matter." And he further explains "The titles were first set down as references for personal use. Now, it is hoped, since the work has grown to its present scope, that it may be helpful to others."

We regret that to a large extent the first statement negates the wish of the second. For the specialist who is willing to examine each item much important material is listed, including the titles of many newspaper and magazine articles which would not ordinarily be discovered. The germ of an excellent idea, an index by song titles, is present but not thoroughly carried out. A very few titles of commercial records of folk songs are also given. There is much greater need for a classified bibliography of folk song — one that would serve as an introduction to the subject. For the layman or musician, no approach would seem more forbidding than this volume. It is too bad that a book that is less than completely useful should reach such impressive publication abroad. It will be some time before a publisher will dare to undertake even an improved volume in this country.

NEW MUSIC

By HARRISON POTTER

TRANSSCRIPTIONS for piano seem to hold first place in recent issues of G. Schirmer, Inc.

Percy Grainger has added to his already long list of "free settings," a transcription of John Dowland's *Now, O, Now, I Needs Must Part* in a concert version which will probably find a place on many future programs. The purist will no doubt object to the "Graingerisms" which seem to obscure the simplicity of Dowland's beautiful song by their elaborateness.

Even Mr. Godowski has yielded to the "free" spirit by introducing original harmonies in his otherwise admirable transcriptions of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms songs. These include *By the Sea* and *Faded Blossoms* by Schubert, *Highland Cradle Song* by Schumann, and *The Vain Suit* by Brahms. In one instance this spirit led to the omission of a complete phrase from the Brahms song.

These are obviously designed for the home pianist rather than concert programs.

There is a collection of *Airs of the Eighteenth Century* which Mr. Godowsky has given settings of simplicity, again for the pianist of more moderate attainments.

However, the concert pianist will find welcome variety for his repertoire in a volume of Mr. Godowsky's original works and in two grateful pieces *Gigue* and *Minuet*.

There is a gay *Mountain Tune* by Wendell Kenney, of the sort made popular recently by American composers with a taste for our folk music.

David Guion appears as the composer of a *Mother Goose* concert suite. Seventeen short pieces bearing the familiar Mother Goose titles are set very amusingly, and altho not virtuoso pieces, they should not be overlooked by the concert pianist in search of good American music in a humorous vein.

There is a good arrangement of the *Volga Boatman's Song* for two pianos by Alexander Kelberine; and Harold Triggs has two original compositions for two pianos which should be useful and popular—*Negro Spirituals* and *Valse* — both brilliant pieces.

†The Mitre Press, Mitre Street, London, E. C. 3, England. \$6.00.

BUXTEHUDE: 1637-1937

By DAVID EWEN

I

THE silence with which the world of music has permitted the tercentenary of Dietrich Buxtehude to pass emphasizes with particular force the lamentable neglect suffered by one of the greatest creative masters, and one of the most potent historic forces, that music has ever known. During the past year, the tercentennial anniversary, only one major Buxtehude composition received wide performance in America — a passacaglia, featured in an orchestral transcription of Lucien Cailliet on the programs of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. Only two Buxtehude compositions were pressed upon phonograph discs.* When this information is coupled with the facts that, in recent years, a performance of a Buxtehude work has been of such rarity as to strain the memory, and that only half a dozen or so morsels have been reproduced on phonograph records,** one begins to appreciate the appalling obscurity which has engulfed a composer who should be recognized as one of the major figures in the history of music.

This is an appropriate time in which to reappraise the work of Buxtehude and give it the position it deserves in the world of music.

II

The biographical material available on Buxtehude is not copious; there are two biographies of the composer, one of which appeared only recently.*** The essential facts of his life are known. He was born in Helsingborg, Sweden, three hundred years ago. His family was musical; his father, Johann Buxtehude, was for a long time the distinguished organist of the St. Olaf Church in Helsingör (Shakespeare's Elsinore), Denmark.

From his father, Dietrich Buxtehude received most of his musical education. When this education came to a close, Buxtehude assumed a position as organist in Helsingborg (between the years of 1657 and 1660), during which time his virtuosity at the organ first attracted considerable attention.

When he was about thirty years old, Buxtehude, after having served as organist also at Elsinore, moved to Lübeck, Germany, where he became the organist of St. Mary's, at the same time marrying the daughter of his predecessor, Tunder, as was prescribed by the rules. It was in this position that Buxtehude achieved his great reputation, principally as performer on the organ, and secondarily as a composer for that instrument. For forty years Buxtehude's organ playing at St. Mary's attracted pilgrims from many parts of Europe: it is well known that Johann Sebastian Bach made the journey from Arnstadt to Lübeck on foot, in 1705, when he was so dazzled by Buxtehude's genius that he prolonged his leave of absence to become his pupil; also that, shortly before this, Handel, too, had made a pilgrimage to Lübeck.

During these forty years, Buxtehude conducted a series of concerts which he called *Abendmusiken*, given on five Sundays prior to Christmas. These concerts became famous throughout Europe, and it is for these concerts that Buxtehude composed the greatest portion of his vocal and instrumental music.

Dietrich Buxtehude died in Lübeck on May 9, 1707. Both Bach and Handel were considered as possible successors to Buxtehude, but were rejected principally because they refused to abide by the rule that specified that

*Cantata No. 12, *O fröhliche Stunden*, Musicraft 1009; Cantata No. 16, *Singet dem Herrn*, Musicraft 1008.

***Prelude and Fugue in E major*, for organ, Artiphone 12083; *Fugue in F major*, for organ, Gramophone FM23; *Prelude and Fugue in G minor*, for

organ, Brunswick 90177; *Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne*, for organ, Odeon 25496; *Chorale prelude, In dulci jubilo*, for organ, Ultraphone EP174; *Chorale prelude, Komm heiliger Geist*, Kantorei 16; *Sonata*, for trio, Artiphone 11741/6.

***Pirro, Andre, *Dietrich Buxtehude* (in French) — Stahl, Wilhelm, *Buxtehude* (in German).

the successor must marry Buxtehude's daughter.

III

Only when an attempt is made to compare Buxtehude's music with the work of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, does its full greatness become apparent. And only then does it become evident how enormous an influence he exerted over the spiritual growth of Johann Sebastian Bach. Compared with Buxtehude's compositions for organ — the field in which he made his major contributions — the organ pieces of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) and Johann Froberger (1616-1667) are almost primitive. To compare a fugue by either of these two composers† with one by Buxtehude is to place a basilica at the side of St. Peter's. Both Frescobaldi and Froberger had a consummate feeling for form, and their fugal writing is adroitly achieved. But only Bach was Buxtehude's superior in translating the constraining form of the fugue into human experience, in infusing into its formerly lifeless architecture the pulse and heart-beat of a human organism.

Buxtehude is at his greatest in those forms which were embryonic when he found them and which he developed into gargantuan proportions before passing them on to their ultimate master, Bach — namely, the chorale-prelude, the chaconne, the passacaglia, and the fantasia. In these forms, where imaginative treatment is of greater significance than technical adroitness, Buxtehude towered over his predecessors. His inventiveness in the manipulation of melodic material and his phenomenal ability to etch light and shade, to contrast emotions, and to build effects in the variation-form in his chaconnes and passacaglias would have been considered extraordinary, even if Buxtehude had come after Bach. As it is, with Buxtehude having composed his music before Bach reached full maturity, Buxtehude must be ranked as one of the most prodigious masters in the history of music.

The form in which Buxtehude is generally conceded to have achieved his most felicitous expression is the cantata. As regards his development of the chorale-prelude, Cecil Gray wrote: "The chorale-prelude was raised to an unexemplified pitch of elaboration, and enriched with every conceivable device of contrapuntal and decorative resource at his disposal. In his hands, indeed, the theme is fre-

quently so varied and adorned with arabesques as to become totally unrecognizable, and even when presented textually, it is often hidden from sight altogether under the exuberant welter of ornamentation with which it is surrounded."

History has to a great extent recognized the influence that Buxtehude exerted over Johann Sebastian Bach. "As John the Baptist was to Christ," once commented A. Eaglefield Hull, "so was . . . Buxtehude to Bach." The tercentennial anniversary of Buxtehude's birth is not too soon, surely, for a recognition of the fact that Buxtehude was important not only as an influence but also as a musical creator in his own right. A re-examination of Buxtehude's works, of which a remarkable amount survives, will, I feel certain, place him among the greatest creative masters that the history of music has known.

New Society Issues

THE Sibelius Society has at last recorded the *Fourth Symphony*. The wide publicity given the performance of this work in the Stokowski version several years ago, left people conjecturing whether or not the Society would record this austere composition again. Over a year ago word came from England that Sibelius had voiced dissatisfaction with Mr. Stokowski's reading, and that he definitely wished the Society to record the *Fourth Symphony* again. At that time, rumor had it that he had chosen Schneevoigt as the conductor. The latest Society set, containing besides the symphony, *Lemminkäinen's Homecoming* and *Incidental Music to the Tempest*, has for conductor Sir Thomas Beecham. The orchestra is the London Philharmonic.

* * * *

The last set of Beethoven Piano Sonatas, played by Artur Schnabel, is announced for early release. This volume will contain Opus 10, No. 1; Opus 10, No. 3; and Opus 79.

* * * *

The latest volume of the Beethoven Violin Sonata Society featuring Fritz Kreisler, has also been announced. It contains Opus 30, No. 1; and Opus 96.

* * * *

The sixth volume of the Hugo Wolf Society (six discs) is to contain among other songs, *Zur Ruh'*, *zur Ruh'*; *Komm, O Tod*; *Storchenbotschaft*; and *Der Feuerreiter*. Five singers contributed to this set: Tiana Lemnitz, Marta Fuchs, Karl Erb, Helge Roswänge and Herbert Janssen.

†The *G minor fugue* of Frescobaldi, for example, included in the album of old music by the American Society for Ancient Instruments (Victor 1663).

Medtner and His Piano Music

By HENRY S. GERSTLE*

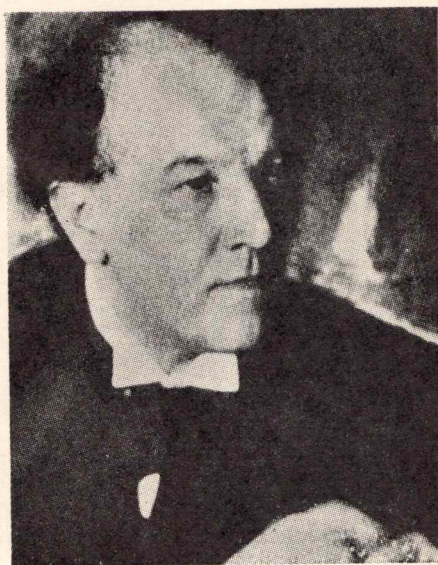
A COMPOSER who has ever chosen to go his own way, with a healthy disregard for contemporary external influences, is Nicolai Medtner. In a person of less imagination and of weaker intellectual fibre such a choice would be fatal to a viable art and would merely result in featureless and epigonic products of his pen. However much Medtner has, consciously or unconsciously, avoided seeking new paths in music, there is no gainsaying the fact that what he says could be said by no other composer in just the same way. The stupid phrase with which his name is frequently associated, namely, the "Russian Brahms", is valid only insofar as it can be said also of the German master that he sought to break no new ground in the development of music, but merely wrote as he felt.

Not that the importance of Medtner or the magnitude of his genius is in any way comparable to that of Brahms — far from it. His emotional range is much too limited for that. But within the range to which he has chosen to limit himself he remains a most remarkable figure. It will not do to call Medtner a reactionary. He is rather one of the last products of a calmer and saner era, when tastes were more discerning and subtle.

Medtner has remained comparatively unknown because he has steadfastly refused to make concessions to the public. Most "modernists" will not accept him as a significant figure lest they be considered hopeless old fogies, for Medtner has not completely broken with the past.

It is a significant fact that Medtner appeals to musicians of widely varying tastes. Among his admirers are several well-known composers and musicologists who have written glowingly about composers so diverse as Stravinsky, Wagner, Silbelius, Mussorgsky, Mahler, Busoni, Bartok, Delius and Alban Berg. While it is true that the present musi-

cal epoch is one of impassivity and hardness, of barbarity even, there are still some souls who refuse to capitulate to the vain bustle of modern life, who choose their own paths, and who remain uninfluenced by every manifestation of current fashion. Bach, Mozart and Brahms (to name only a few) brushed aside this current fashion and the public opinion of their day, and from their fastnesses produced age-defying music through the sheer force of their genius, utilizing only



Nicolai Medtner

the common musical currency of their time. So it is with Medtner, who, in this age of destructive values, possesses the requisite aloofness of mind and the courage of his convictions to write music of rich imagination, emotional sincerity and abstract beauty that goes straight to the consciousness of the listener. He is by turns tender, noble, lyrical, passionate, gay. It is to be feared that in some of the earlier works he has allowed his technique to get in the way of his imagination, with the result that we encounter in such passages

*Mr. Gerstle is the author of THE PIANO MUSIC OF NICOLAI MEDTNER which appeared in the October, 1924 issue of The Music Quarterly.

some rather dry note-spinning; but these passages are by far in the minority. There is in his music an absence of sentimentality and commonplaceness, two characteristics generally found in the work of derivative composers. His music reveals a seriousness and high purpose, a passion for perfection and a detestation of the obvious and facile. Occasionally his melodies are so obscured by other elements of the music that an inattentive listener may fail to perceive them at all. Medtner makes no concessions to popularity and rarely descends to earth; therefore justly to appreciate him we must climb to his level and approach his music in the proper spirit. He is essentially a composer for musicians, and the sympathetic listener will probably derive more pleasure from him in the privacy of his music-room than he will in the concert-hall.

It is not the materials with which a composer works that make him a prophet or a charlatan, a personality or a nonentity, but the spirit in which a work is conceived. What seems new today may be hopelessly outmoded ten years from now. On the other hand, a composer with original ideas may employ a simple major triad in a way that sounds entirely new and arresting. Innovations in art are always welcome, provided that they are sincerely conceived. They make for progress, but they are merely a means to an end. A composer employing polytonality, for instance, might produce a monumental masterpiece; another, using the same means, might turn out a mere bundle of tricks, as stereotyped and barren as a symphony by Gyrowetz or a string quartet by Onslow. Many an "ultra-modern" composer has made "a crowd of idiots stand and stare at him in gaping astonishment and admiration" (as Delius once said about a celebrated *Ballet Russe* collaboration); others have created works which have the perennial charm of a Rameau or a Mozart.

It is not strictly true that Medtner has been content to employ the means that were at the disposal of such composers as Schumann and Brahms. Actually he has logically developed these means to a point at which they become more significant to the present era than they would have been had he been content merely to be an epigone, which he most decidedly is not. Medtner's command of the technique of composition is remarkable, but it must not be thought that his music appeals to the mind only. If one will but take the trouble to become sufficiently acquainted with his music, he will reap the rewards of his labor, for it touches the heart as well. Upon first encoun-

tering it one is constantly surprised by felicitous turns in the melody, harmony and rhythm; so that one seldom can anticipate the composer's thought, as one can so often do with composers like Mendelssohn, Dvorak and Saint-Saens. And withal, there is an inevitability in the music that gives one the feeling that it had to be written in that way and in no other.

Medtner has largely confined the expression of his ideas to the piano, which instrument contemporary composers, with but few exceptions, have avoided like the plague. This has not only made it difficult to assign him his proper place in the music of today, but has definitely restricted his universality. Color seems to be of little importance to him — the main thing is the drawing. Thus it is that his music often makes no immediate appeal, but familiarity with it breeds growing admiration. Medtner's themes are not always arresting in themselves, but he makes them so by the exercise of his marvelous skill in developing them. But this skill never gives one the impression that something has been manufactured; it is perfectly spontaneous. Moreover, he has few mannerisms, and he never repeats himself.

It is perhaps in the domain of form that Medtner has drifted farthest from his predecessors. The forms in which he moulds his instrumental works are conditioned by the musical thought, just as his songs are by the poems he has chosen to set. Thus in his sonatas he is not content to fill up formulae already used by masters of an earlier epoch, but creates his own forms to suit his ideas. There is real novelty in his treatment of rhythm that places him far ahead of some of the widely touted so-called masters of free rhythm of today, although this novelty is not at once apparent and is so subtle as to elude the casual listener. It is the presence of these traits that causes Medtner's music to grow on one, rather than to become innocuous after several hearings, as derivative and unimaginative music does.

The superficial music-lover usually considers "ultra-modern" music (whatever that may be) purely from a harmonic standpoint, rarely from a melodic, and almost never from the standpoint of rhythm or form. It is here that Medtner gives the lie to those who call him a reactionary. They can search in vain for queer harmony and unusual melodic lines — but it never dawns on them that originality of rhythm or form may be just as intriguing.

The forms in which Medtner casts his sonatas, for example, are absolutely his own,

whether they are in one movement or in three. In his *Novels* and *Fairy Tales* he unfolds the music in the manner of a narrative or legend. These generic titles are more appropriate in some cases than in others, but the music always gives one the feeling of inevitability: it is never static or hesitant. In that sense some of the sonatas could with equal propriety be called novels or tales, or even epics.

Medtner was born in Moscow in 1879 of German parents and studied with Safonov at the Conservatoire in that city, having entered in 1891. Upon graduating in 1900 he was awarded the Gold Medal and later won the Rubinstein prize in Vienna for piano playing. He then made several tours of Germany and Russia, finally settling in his native city as professor at the Conservatoire, which position he held until the Revolution, when circumstances prevented his continuing in that capacity. After the war he taught music in a school in a suburb of Moscow, until 1922, when he left Russia and began another series of tours, this time including the United States, which he reached in 1924. The following years were busy ones for him, being devoted to composition, teaching and concertizing. In 1936 we find him in London, which is still his residence at the time of this writing.

Besides the solo piano works and the songs, he has written a piano concerto, two fine sonatas for violin and piano, three enchanting nocturnes for the same instruments, a *Sonata-Vocalise* and a *Suite-Vocalise*, the last two being interesting treatments of the voice as an instrument pure and simple. Medtner is usually at his best in large-scale works, such as the piano concerto, the second violin sonata, the *Sonata-Ballade* and the sonatas in E minor and G minor. But from the very beginning of his career as a composer he has written so many fine songs and smaller piano pieces as to cause one to hesitate about dwelling too much on the more extended works. There is no trace of immaturity in his very earliest works; he seems

to have sprouted as a composer fully equipped in every way.

The album of piano pieces that Victor issued recently shows admirable enterprise on the part of that company. The album contains not only some of the composer's best, but also some of his least characteristic works. As the composer is the interpreter, we must perforce accept the performance as authoritative; but in truth it must be said that there is such harshness of tone and lack of clarity in certain passages that one cannot decide whether to blame the performer, the piano or the recording. Two of the finest pieces in the album, namely, the *Fairy Tales* in E minor and in B minor, suffer from these defects. To one unfamiliar with the music, only an examination of the printed notes will reveal the entire message of the composer.

It is suggested that the listener confronted with Medtner's music for the first time try the *Fairy Tale*, Op. 20, No. 1; the *Novelle*, Op. 17, No. 1, and the charming *Fairy Tales*, Op. 26, Nos. 2 and 3; and if this music appeals to him he will end by buying the entire album, from which, one feels certain, he will derive many hours of happiness.

It is unfortunate that the composer did not see fit to include the fine *Novelle*, Op. 17, No. 2, or one of the sonatas. The pianist with even a fair technical equipment will be handsomely rewarded by studying, in addition to the above-mentioned works, the *Dithyrambs*, Op. 10; the *Arabesques*, Op. 7; the *Novelles*, Op. 17, and the *Tales* of Opp. 14, 20 and 26; the *Lyrical Fragments*, Op. 23 and the *Sonata*, Op. 22. And if he can commandeer a tolerably good violinist, he will not have struggled in vain with the duo-sonatas and the exquisite nocturnes. As for the songs, there are many that can be compared with the best by the great song-writers. The poems of Goethe, Heine, Nietzsche, Pushkin and some of the Russian symbolists such as Tucheve and Foeth are here wedded to music with keen regard for the text and with impeccable taste.



MODERN GRAMOPHONE

By Donald W. Aldous, M. Inst. E.

(Continued from December)

THE dimensions of the triangular-shaped cutting styli are about 0.04 in. wide, with a cutting angle of 70-90 degrees and a 25-40 degree angle rake at the rear face to permit easy removal of the wax thread from the groove-cut.

The recording head itself operates on the moving-coil principle and the speech-coils are fixed on the pole pieces of an electro magnet. The drive impulses are transmitted to the cutting stylus by a single turn coil of aluminium (aluminum) wire, which is coupled magnetically to the speech-coils. An air-suction tube directly behind the stylus draws off the fine thread of wax, termed "swarf", by the ploughing stylus as it cuts the original sound vibrations in the form of a modulated groove on the wax.

The cutting stylus is a sapphire, which is sufficiently hard to withstand wear but soft enough to be ground by diamond dust without chipping. The points (tips) must be free from surface-flaws, since they would cause a pronounced hiss or noise in the finished record; accordingly the tips are examined through a powerful projection microscope for traces of roughness and to measure cutting angles.

The amplifiers for the microphones and recorders are arranged on the first floor of the studio building and by a complex network of screened wiring any combination of microphones, amplifiers and recorders can be brought into use. One example of the value of this facility is that during the recording of an important broadcast several master waxes can be cut simultaneously. An adjoining room houses the rectifier panels in which there are five separate channels, employing mercury vapour rectifier valves (tubes). Filament current is obtained from a separate battery room.

Considerable reference has been made to the wax blanks, which consist of a mixture of insoluble metallic stearates and vegetable waxes, e. g., carnauba, and animal waxes, e. g., beeswax. Another composition may be described as lead-soap or lead-plaster. The exact constituents, proportions and methods of mixing are one of the trade secrets never divulged by record manufacturers, but the general process of blank manufacture is begun by mixing the stearates and waxes in a

cauldron, heated to the high temperature of approximately 550 degrees Fahrenheit by superheated steam. Thermometers placed all around the cauldron indicate the correct temperature, which must be kept constant. The molten wax is then poured into a centrifugal churn or alternatively pressed through a filter, and while still hot is moulded in brass trays so, when cool, forming cakes about 14 inches or 12 inches in diameter for 12-inch or 10-inch records respectively and about one inch in thickness to prevent warping. These blanks are now cut and polished on special machines (so-called shaving machines) and so are faced with a mirror-like surface. All blanks must be handled very carefully, as fingerprints, moisture, or dust would spoil them for recording.

Finally, the air-conditioning plant in the basement must be mentioned, for it is important not only to maintain the entire building at a level temperature suitable for the waxes, but also to prevent any variations in the humidity of the sound absorption material in the walls of the studios.

OVERTONES

A new recording of Dvorak's *Symphony No. 5, From the New World*, played by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, George Szell conducting, has been issued by HMV (their discs C2949-53).

Myra Hess, regarded by many as the foremost woman pianist now before the public, has at last recorded a piano concerto. On HMV discs C2942-5, Miss Hess with the aid of an unnamed symphony, direction Walter Goehr, plays Schumann's *Piano Concerto*.

Toscanini has made Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra (HMV discs 3333-37). Although we have no assurance that the conductor recorded any other works with England's leading radio orchestra, which he recently conducted before coming to America to take over the NBC-Symphony, we feel certain that other recordings must have been obtained.

Furtwängler has made a first recording for HMV. This is his much discussed performance of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. There are nine parts to the recording (HMV discs DB3328-31, DB3332).

Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in This Issue: NATHAN BRODER, A. P. De WEESE, PAUL GIRARD,

PHILIP MILLER and PETER HUGH REED

ORCHESTRA

BRAHMS: *Tragic Overture*, Opus 81 (three sides); and MOZART: *Marriage of Figaro*—*Overture*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set X-85, two discs, price \$3.25.

BRAHMS should have called this work *Dramatic Overture*, rather than *Tragic*, for it has no real tragic implications. Instead it has the dramatic sweep and strength that we associate with his *Third Symphony*. This overture followed the *Academic Festival Overture* in composition. Brahms was characteristically modest about this work, for he wrote his publisher in the following manner: "What is your opinion as regards overtures? You will probably say quite rightly that they are unnecessary until those of Weber, Cherubini and Mendelssohn are out of print."

The *Tragic Overture*, according to Kalbeck, was originally intended, along with the two middle movements of the *Third Symphony*, as music for the drama *Faust*, although Brahms denied he had any special tragedy in mind when he wrote it.

The music is objective in character and majestic in stride, with dark-hued harmonies that paint a dramatic picture. Beecham fully understands the scope and purpose of the score, and conveys it with eminent assurance. It is good to have this performance by Beecham, one of the big minds in music of today. His reading supersedes the angular, unimaginative one of Boult.

Every conductor seems to want to have a hand at the *Marriage of Figaro Overture*. The recordings of this are too numerous to cite. Beecham's performance is full of buoyancy and verve, but is more related to the spaciousness of a modern concert hall than to the intimacy of a small opera house, for which the music was intended. The recording here is comparable to the best of today.

—P. H. R.

CHABRIER: *Espana Rhapsody*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc No. 4375, ten-inch, price \$1.00.

THE exuberance and vivacity of this familiar piece are excellently set forth by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston "Pops". And the recording is brilliant and lifelike.

Chabrier based his *Spanish Rhapsody* on original airs. The work is a model of its kind, in which Gallic wit is matched with Iberian rhythms and vivid orchestral coloring. It is in the projection of the latter that this recording makes all others obsolete, because, for the first time in a recording, all of the subtle percussive effects are in evidence and the harmonic nuances are fully realized.

There will be many, we believe, who will thank Mr. Fiedler for this recording.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

DELIBES: *Naila*, *Intermezzo*; and TSCHAIKOWSKY: *The Swan Lake*, *Waltz*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Efrem Kurtz. Columbia 69080-D, price \$1.50.

KURTZ leads the London Philharmonic in excerpts from two of the most popular of the old ballets. The *Naila Intermezzo* is the familiar delicately-colored waltz.

Tschaikowsky's *Waltz* is the second number in the *Swan Lake* suite. At the time he wrote it the composer was under the spell of French ballet music, and he thought his own work poor stuff compared to *Sylvia*. Be that as it may, the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons sing in rotation very gracefully against the strings.

The orchestra gives substantial readings in an easy manner, and the recording is full and unforced.

—A. P. D.

GADE: *A Folk Tale, Polonaise and Bridal Waltz*; and H. C. LUMBYE: *The Mounted Guards of Amager, Final Galop*; played by the State Radio Orchestra of Copenhagen, conducted by Emil Reesen. Columbia disc, 10-inch, No. 17106-D, price \$1.00.

THE labels on this disc bristle with Danish names. Niels W. Gade, Denmark's greatest composer, was esteemed by the other great nineteenth century composers. Schumann respected his compositions, and Mendelssohn at times entrusted him with the conductorship of the Gewandhaus concerts.

The ballet *A Folk Tale* was written in 1854 in collaboration with Antoine-Auguste de Bournonville, who also hailed from Copenhagen, studied in the school of Vestris, danced at the Paris Opera, and returned home as first dancer and ballet director of the Theatre Royal. He is largely responsible for the high development of the dance in Denmark, and created over forty original ballets.

Both the *Polonaise* and the *Bridal Waltz* have been previously recorded, but they can stand up to bigger audiences than they have reached thus far.

The reverse has the final galop from *The Mounted Guards of Amager*. The composer, Hans Christian Lumbye, another Copenhagen-er, was a military and concert dance musician who often toured with his band when he was not playing at the Tivoli, near Copenhagen. He wrote over four hundred compositions, stage pieces, marches, and dances. The present sample of his work is an extremely lively galop. This is the dance we have so often run across when mulling through the stacks of sheet music that belonged to our grandmothers and great-grandmothers — "a lively dance in duple measure, performed with sliding steps from side to side." The instrumentation is heavy here, and we seem to hear a military band, super-imposed upon an orchestra.

Both selections are performed by the efficient State Radio Orchestra of Copenhagen. The conductor is Emil Reesen, a Copenhagen pianist, composer, and capellmeister, long the leader at the Tivoli Theatre, and since 1927 the chief radio conductor at his home city.

—A. P. D.

HINDU MUSIC; played by Uday Shan-Kar's Company of Hindu Musicians, Vishnudas Shirali, Director. Victor set M-382, three 12-inch discs, two ten-inch discs, price \$9.

THE story behind these records will be found elsewhere in this issue. In our esti-

mation, this is the most enjoyable and the most treasurable group of recordings of Oriental music ever made.

Shirali, the highly talented musical director of the Shan-Kar Ballet Company, tells us that it is fatal to approach Hindusthani music "in terms of European music," for this leads to an idea, which has long been too prevalent, that this music is not only difficult to understand but that it is little more than a "monotonous repetition of the same theme." In such a conclusion, he contends, "the essential spirit, the basic nature of Hindusthani music is lost, for its subtle variations are almost infinite." This fact is borne out by repeated hearings of the music that Shirali and his musicians have recorded for Victor.

Occidental ears are attuned to a diatonic scale composed of twelve semi-tones, while Oriental ears are accustomed to a scale composed of twenty-odd quarter tones and thirds of tones. "Since the Hindusthani scale is not tempered," says Shirali, "the notes are more or less fugitive and subtle." The effectiveness of this music can be attested by those who have seen the Shan-Kar Company, and by those who have travelled in India.

There is every reason for this set of records to be included in a library of recorded music, for it presents some fine examples of the music of a truly great race of people, and it also presents the work of a highly gifted group of musicians.

The captivating qualities of these records will be immediately perceptible in the *Danse Kartikeyya* and in the magical drum performance of a *Raga* by Shirali on disc 14508, and again in the nostalgic beauty of the *Danse Indra* (disc 1834). If one does not wish the entire set, these two records are well worth acquiring. The recording here is excellent.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

LISZT (Arr. Muller): *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*; played by Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Leopold Stokowski. Victor disc No. 14422, price \$2.00.

IN the picture *A Hundred Men and a Girl*, Stokowski selected Liszt's *Second Hungarian Rhapsody* as the *tour de force*. This was the selection, it will be remembered by those who saw the picture, that the unemployed musicians played to attract Stokowski's attention and win his approval in the hallway of his home. The performance and recording of this piece in the picture was most impressive.

Performance and recording here are likewise most impressive, in fact this is one of the most thrilling discs of its kind ever issued. Undistracted by the gestures of the conductor's hands, we can listen to a richly rewarding tonal investiture of style and brilliance. The value of the music is beside the point, for here we are made to realize what a great conductor can do with a piece of music that is more frequently distorted than performed with style and finish. If music like this is to be performed in orchestral arrangement, Stokowski is assuredly the conductor to bring out fully all its effects. —P. H. R.

* * * *

ROSSINI: *Overture to Semiramide*; played by the New York Philharmonic Symphony, direction Arturo Toscanini. Victor Set M408, two discs. Price \$4.50.

THE now-forgotten opera *Semiramide* was composed in thirty-three days and first produced in Venice in 1823. The overture is a lively little piece, in form a fragmentary composition with little or no transition from section to section. Much of the thematic material comes from the opera.

Toscanini, who has always had a particular fondness for Rossini's music, plays this work for all it is worth. The recording is very bril-

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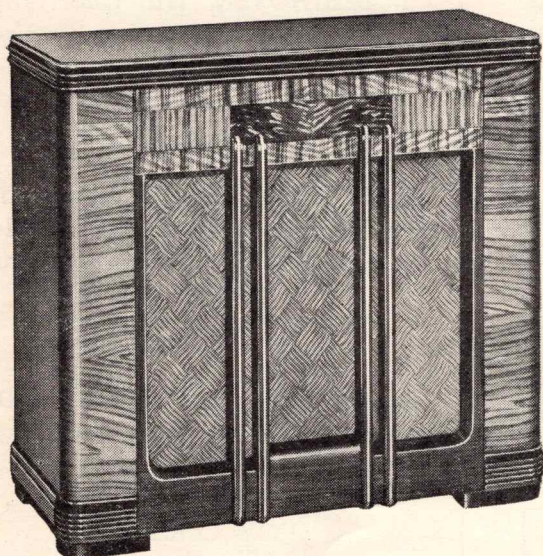
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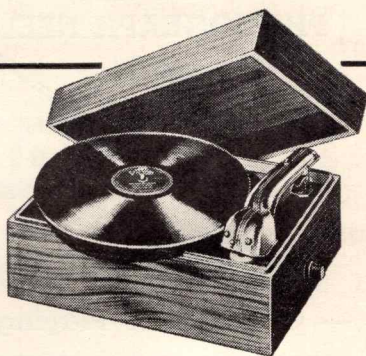


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—N. B.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BACH: *Flute Sonatas* — No. 1 in *B minor*; No. 3 in *E flat*, and No. 4 in *C major*; played by Georges Barrère and Yella Pessl. Victor set M-406, four discs, price \$8.00.

ONE of Bach's most fertile periods of composition was the time he spent in Cöthen. During the six years of his residence there, 1717-1723, he devoted himself mainly to the writing of chamber music and various instrumental compositions for small combinations, like his concertos for cembalo and strings, his *Brandenburg Concertos* and the first two of his four *Overtures* or *Suites* for small orchestra. The solo violin and cello sonatas, the violin and cembalo sonatas, the viola da gamba and cembalo sonatas, and the flute and cembalo sonatas, among other works, mostly date from this period.

There are six of the flute sonatas, all too seldom heard in concert today; for the flute is not as highly regarded as a solo instrument now as it was in Bach's time. The first three flute sonatas, in *B minor*, *A major* and *E flat major*, have cembalo parts fully realized by the composer, but the other three, in *C major*, *E minor* and *E major*, have only a *continuo* or figured bass accompaniment, which the performer at the cembalo is expected to realize as in Bach's day. There are, of course, editions published today in which the figured bass is fully written out, but some cembalo players still prefer to realize this part themselves in performance. Miss Pessl is one of the latter, and in the case of the recording of the *C major Sonata*, the only one selected from the second group, she followed this procedure in the studio.

The flute sonatas, according to Spitta, are "influenced by the form of the concerto, both in outline and details, and in some points correspond exactly with it." Bach's writing for the flute is wholly delightful, the melodic lines allow for consistent singing tone and the ornamentation for tonal variation and graceful effects that display the artistic prowess of the performer. The cembalo does not provide just an accompaniment, but is a partner with the flute, for the two instruments, as in the violin and cembalo sonatas and other

similar works of Bach, are given material in imitation and in dialogue form.

The *Sonata in B minor* is the most famous. It has been called the best sonata for the flute ever written. Its first and last movements are fine examples of Bach's craftsmanship, and its second movement is a beautifully expressive *largo*. The other two sonatas, though less momentous, are nonetheless charming companions, replete with graceful melodies, good humor and even wit.

Both the *B minor* and the *E flat Sonatas* have been previously recorded, but not with harpsichord. The former was played by Georges Laurent and Harry Cumpson (Columbia set 203) and the latter was played by René Le Roy and Kathleen Long (National Gramophonic discs 135 and 136).

As admirable as the playing of the two flutists named above is in their respective recordings, the honors go to Mr. Barrère here for his exquisitely intoned and expressive performances. Too, the harpsichord as companion instrument is infinitely preferable. Both Mr. Barrère and Miss Pessl realize this music with exceptional style and nuance. If one does not concede Georges Barrère as the greatest living player of the flute, one must concede that he is an artist of extraordinary attainments and a definitely great musician.

Miss Pessl's musicianship has long been admired. In the past year her many recordings for Columbia have been widely praised, and her qualities extolled upon more than one occasion. Perhaps never before on records has Miss Pessl's "delicacy and clarity of playing," been better set forth; for here the tonal beauty of her harpsichord is not marred by over-amplification. Indeed, considered from the recording standpoint, these sonatas have been most felicitously handled.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in F major for French horn and piano*, Op. 17; played by Gottfried von Freiberg, horn, and Yella Pessl, piano. Columbia set X-86, price \$3.25.

ACCORDING to Cobbett there are thirteen known sonatas for horn and piano, though it seems hardly likely that the general run of mortals will ever have a chance to hear most of them. This work of Beethoven is surely among the more interesting of them, since a certain importance attaches to any work of a major composer. Smooth, graceful and quite conventional, the *Sonata in F* is remarkable chiefly for the novelty of its medium, and belongs definitely among Beethoven's museum pieces.

The *Sonata* was written for a Bohemian virtuoso known as Punto, though his name was really Johann Stich. Beethoven was enough impressed with his man's playing to offer to compose a sonata for him and to perform it with him at Punto's concert in Vienna, April 18, 1800. The composer, we are told, did not begin work on the *Sonata* until the day before the concert, but for all that he produced his piece on schedule. So great was the public response to the work and its performance that the artists gave a repetition. It is probable that Beethoven did no more than sketch his own piano part before the concert, and that its first playing was to some extent improvised.

Undoubtedly Beethoven wrote more inspired and more imaginative music than this on other occasions, but it remains a matter for amazement that he was able, at the age of twenty-nine, to produce so well-integrated a sonata on such short notice.

The work is in three movements. There is a typically extended *Allegro moderato*, a very short but extremely slow *Adagio*, and finally a *Rondo*. As the middle movement is rather in the nature of an intermezzo the weight of the *Sonata*, such as it is, falls in the other two. Of these the first is the more important, and it contains a number of graces, especially in the piano part.

Gottfried von Freiberg is a name new to record labels. His playing is generally smooth and of good tonal quality, though he has not the vitality or definition which we find in Aubrey Brain's performance in the recording of the Brahms *Horn Trio*—but for that matter neither has the sonata. Miss Pessl, appearing for the first time as a pianist, demonstrates the breadth not only of her sympathies but of her abilities. It is she who keeps the work going by the flow of her playing and by her treatment of little turns of phrases. The recording is quite satisfactory. —P. M.

* * * *

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in A major for cello and piano*, Op. 69; played by Emanuel Feuermann, cellist and Myra Hess, pianist. Columbia Set No. 312, three discs. Price \$4.50.

THIS work, the third of Beethoven's five cello sonatas, is a particular favorite with cellists. Music lovers not familiar with it will find, I think, that the grave and lovely melodies of the two end movements, and the tricky *Scherzo* will grow on them with repeated hearings.

The A major sonata was completed in 1808 (not 1803, as the notes furnished with the set have it), the composer having worked at it while the fifth and sixth symphonies were taking shape in his mind. This composition is scarcely on the same exalted plane as the two orchestral masterpieces, but flashes of the inspiration that went into their creation illuminate a corner here and there in the sonata.

The sonata is nicely performed by the two distinguished artists, although one would prefer a warmer tone on the part of the cellist and a bigger style in the solo passages given to the piano. The recording is very good in every respect but that of balance: the cello should not have been given the prominence it has in some passages where its role is subordinate to that of the piano. There is a lengthy cut in the *Scherzo*, a cut, says the author of the notes, which "can be well spared". That is perhaps a matter of opinion. The fact is that the cut amounts to a major operation. The rather unusual formal scheme planned by Beethoven is scherzo-trio-scherzo-trio-scherzo (there are no "repeats" in the movement). In this recording the last two members are lopped off and the result is something quite different from what Beethoven intended.

The sonata occupies five sides. The remaining side contains the *Andantino* from Weber's *Konzertstück*.

—N. B.

* * * *

BEETHOVEN: *Trio in D major*, Opus 70, No. 1 (*Geister* or *Ghost Trio*); played by Hephzibah and Yehudi Menuhin and Maurice Eisenberg. Victor set M-370, three discs, price \$6.50.

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Trio in A minor*, Opus 50 (*To the Memory of a Great Artist*): played by the same group. Victor set M-388, eleven sides, price \$11.00.

THE sterling musical qualities of the Menuhins are certainly set forth in these two works. Mating their musicianship with a splendid cellist (new to records), Maurice Eisenberg, these young people show that they can perform as part of a chamber music ensemble in a manner as admirable as their work as soloists.

The Beethoven *Trio in D major* is a particularly enjoyable work, which is overshadowed only by the "*Archduke*" *Trio*, Opus 97. The buoyant opening movement has a spirited rhythmic impulse and noble thematic material, and the finale suggests the open air of the country that Beethoven loved so well.

The character of the work is entirely objective, the music does not go deep. The second movement, from which the work derives its sobriquet, is in its eerie effects strangely melodramatic music, for Beethoven. Its mystical dark-hued qualities have no spiritual or philosophical connotation, but are derived from the fact that the music was written from notes that Beethoven once sketched for an opera which he contemplated writing on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Tschaikowsky's trio is dedicated to Nicholas Rubinstein, his close friend and advocate. It was Nicholas, the younger brother of Anton Rubinstein, who played Tschaikowsky's earliest compositions in public. The trio is a long work, but as one writer has said—"in spite of its great length, the trio never wearies in the hands of artists who know how to bring out its depths of feeling and its endless variety of effects."

The Menuhin-Eisenberg performance of this music is deftly accomplished. In both works, the artists attain a high order of finesse and at the same time fully realize the spirit of the music at hand. Both the performance and the recording here have been most satisfactorily realized.

Both trios have been recorded previously. The Beethoven was played by the Hirt Trio for Polydor, by the Amsterdam Trio for Odeon, and by the Poltronieri-Casella Trio for Italian-Columbia. None of these sets however achieves the clarity of performance that is to be found in the Menuhin-Eisenberg one. The Tschaikowsky trio was issued by Columbia ten years ago. It is strange that this, his best chamber work, should have waited so long for re-recording. Of the two versions, the preference goes to the present performance in which the "depths of feeling" and the "endless variety of effects" are better set forth, by virtue of superior recording and a better ensemble.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

BLOCH: *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1922); played by Harold and Marion Kahn Berkley. Gamut-set No. 3, four discs, price \$6.50.

CLOSE on the heels of RCA-Victor's announcement that Josef Gingold and Beryl Rubinstein were to record Ernest Bloch's *Sonata* for violin and piano came the release of this album.

This work ranks with the composer's *Piano Quintet* in significance. The emotional intensity of this music cannot be described, for it arouses quite different feelings in different people. It must be heard to be appreciated.

The Berkleys have played this work for fifteen years, so their assimilation and comprehension of its content is of long standing. The composer has complimented them on their performance, which is undeniably a very fine one. The sonata however makes terrific demands on the musicianship of its performers. Its barbaric energy, its rhapsodic fire, are qualities which make one understand how difficult it is to realize them fully in performance. Although theirs is undeniably a sound performance, it cannot be honestly said that the Berkleys reveal its full emotional range.

It will be interesting to compare this performance with Mr. Gingold's and Mr. Rubinstein's. The latter was the first pianist to play the work in public and Bloch has paid him considerable tribute for his brilliant interpretation of the piano part.

The recording here is powerful, the piano tone being uncommonly good, but frequently too big for the size of the violinist's tone.

—P. G.

FAURE: *Quartet, Op. 121*; played by the Pro Arte Quartet. Victor set M-372; price \$8.00.

THOUGH the *String Quartet, Op. 121*, was

Fauré's last composition, and was completed only a short time before the composer's death, it has considerably more than melancholy interest. Not one of his most finished works, its faults may surely be attributed to the state of the great man's health, to his knowledge that the end was near, and his anxiety to finish it before it was too late. The old melodic inspiration and the never failing sincerity are here, especially in the first two movements, but there are signs of labor and the obvious need of revision — formally, perhaps, it is the least perfect of his works. For once he has written too much.

With all these faults, the *Quartet* is more than justified by its first two movements — movements such as only he could have written. The opening *Allegro moderato* sets the prevailing autumnal mood of the work. This is not unnaturally the finest part of the *Quartet* — the most appealing and the most mature. The *Andante* too has so much of the real Fauré in it that the less inspired *Allegro* is a definite falling off, even aside from its over-ample length.

At its best this is a work of remarkable modernity. We must look to the eternally youthful Verdi to match this production of a man of seventy-nine. Throughout the long years of his life Fauré never lost touch with

developments, and this *Quartet* today is far more alive than most of the music of the 1920's, though it belongs quite definitely to that period. Contrapuntal in texture, this is not easy music for the novice, but no lover of Fauré will want to be without it.

The first performance of the work took place after the composer's death, June 12, 1925. The artists were the members of the Krettly Quartet, who some time later made the first recording for French Columbia. Were it not for its historical interest, that version could now be forgotten because of the far superior quality of this performance by the Pro Arte Quartet. I am sure that the smooth and understanding playing of these artists will win far more friends for the music. I have said that the *Quartet* is too long — the Krettleys cut it down to three records, as opposed to the Pro Arte's four, but still the new version is easier to listen to.

* * * * —P. M.

MOZART: *String Quartet in B Flat*, K. 589; played by the Kolisch Quartet. Victor set M-407, three discs, price \$4.50.

MOZART'S last three quartets, dedicated to Frederick William II, King of Prussia, gave prominence to the cello out of deference to the King, who was considered an accomplished cellist. For this reason, and because they were written primarily as music for a social occasion, these quartets have been largely disparaged. Although admittedly of less import than the famous group dedicated to Haydn, they are nonetheless of considerable interest. There is an artistic maturity and a marked individuality in them that might well have been the augury of a newly developing idiom. In other words, these later quartets may well have been a transition in the composer's style, which, had he lived longer, might have materialized in a group of quartets superior to those dedicated to Haydn.

The present string quartet was written following the completion of the opera *Così fan tutte* in 1790, the year before Mozart's death. This music hardly sounds a profound note, its spirit is markedly restrained throughout, yet its workmanship is deft and characteristic of its composer.

Last Spring Musiccraft issued a two-record set of this quartet excellently played by the Perolé String Quartet. Their performance did not observe the repeats in the score, but the present one does, hence the extra disc.

The Kolisch Quartet, it will be remembered, are that highly accomplished group of musicians who play without a score before

them. Despite their splendidly polished artistry and their unified plasticity, this group are more admirable for their technical prowess than for their sentient warmth. In concert, we have admired their accomplished musicianship, which is heightened by the fact that no musical notes are in evidence, yet we have always felt that this particular accomplishment hindered a full realization of the music's emotional qualities. In the present work, it must be admitted, the Kolisch Quartet attain a rare suavity and polish, but they do not realize either the sparkle or the inherent ardor of the music. The *larghetto*, for example, although perfectly played, lacks luster.

The observance of the repeats in this performance is not, in our estimation, conducive to any greater enjoyment of the music. The essential sparkle and warmth of the Perolé's performance makes it more satisfying, despite the fact that the quality of the recording is not as fine as in the Kolisch set.

—P. H. R.

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RAVEL: *String Quartet in F major*; played by the Pro Arte Quartet. Victor set M-400, three discs, price \$6.50.

THE Pro Arte Quartet is distinguished for its tonal luminosity. Perhaps in no other work which they have recorded has this quality been better set forth than here. The suavity and polish of Ravel's sensitive and exquisite craftsmanship demands luminous treatment and a coordination and unity in performance that come only after long association with the music. The Pro Arte Quartet achieves this unity in a rarely artistic manner, and leaves us with no question as to the players' intimate knowledge of the music.

Ravel wrote this work in 1902 at the age of twenty-seven, yet he might have written it only yesterday, for the freshness and beauty of the music suggest no date.

Although this recording was made several years ago, we doubt that anyone would know it from hearing these discs. This is the finest performance of the Ravel Quartet in our estimation issued to date.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

SCHUBERT: *Trio No. 2 in E flat major, Op. 100*; played by the Busch-Serkin Trio. Victor set M-374, five discs, price \$10.00.

SCHUBERT'S two trios, Opus 99 and Opus 100, were products of his last year but one on earth. They are both full of the happiest of thoughts and fluent melodies. The *B flat Trio*, Opus 99, is undeniably the finer of the two, the more compact, yet the *E flat Trio*, Opus 100, owns many delightful moments despite its protracted thought. Its elegiac second movement is one of the finest of its type ever written. Concerning the length of the *E flat Trio*, the annotator of the National Gramophonic Society set, issued nearly a decade and a half ago, has said—"one never needs to bear up against prolixity in the doubtful hope of coming across something good once in a while; in Schubert the something good is happening all the time. You must allow him those repetitions, those extended treatments of one idea; in return you have the felicities of his melting key-changes, kaleidoscopic in variety and subtlety, and the never-failing *bon amie* of his happy spirit, pouring itself out in rich profusion."

Schumann, or was it Schubert (writers quote both), stated that he thought the *B flat Trio* "passive, feminine, lyrical," and the *E flat Trio* "active, masculine, dramatic." This is one way of explaining the contrasting

qualities of the two works, and at the same time giving the inevitable compliment to the ladies.

The Busch-Serkin-Busch performance of this work is a rarely poised and expressive one, excellent from all points, which includes its mechanical qualities.

—P. H. R.

PIANO

BUSONI: *Indanisches Tagebuch (Indian Diary)*; played by Egon Petri. Columbia disc 69010D, price \$1.50.

IT was the late Natalie Curtis, a pupil of Busoni's, who gave the composer the melodies for this work. This was in 1910, but it was five years before he wrote the *Indian Diary*. The present writer, who owes the earliest development of his musical knowledge to the interest and good will of Natalie Curtis, remembers vividly her delight and interest in this composition when it was published. Natalie Curtis was one of the pioneers in this country in the collecting of authentic Indian airs and Negro melodies.

Busoni treated the melodies that Miss Curtis gave to him in a quasi-modern and romantic manner. He was adverse to Dvorak's procedure with like material. One writer has found his handling of these American Indian tunes similar to de Falla's treatment of Spanish themes.

There are four parts to this work, which is written in the form of a suite. The primitive character of the first and second themes is accentuated by ingenious harmonic dissonances. The third piece, a songful *largo*, melancholic and nostalgic in character, is skillfully intensified with richly poetic harmonies; and the fourth, based on an angular tune, is unfortunately obscured by an over-elaborate background. Of the four sections, the third is unquestionably the most effective and the best harmonized.

Mr. Petri plays this music with sympathetic feeling. He was a pupil and close friend of the composer's, and is accredited the foremost living exponent of his music. This is a fine contribution to recorded music selected from material out of the beaten track. If Busoni's music is not regarded as the work of a great composer, it deserves at least to be regarded as the work of a great musical mind and a great pianist. It is to be hoped that Petri will play more of his master's music for recording. The reproduction here is splendid, the overtones of the instrument being especially fine.

—P. H. R.

CHOPIN: *Scherzo No. 4 in E major, Opus 54*; played by Vladimir Horowitz. Victor disc No. 14634, price \$2.00.

JUST three years ago, Arthur Rubinstein gave us all four of the *Scherzi* in an album set. Rubinstein was marked as a fine interpreter of these pieces; he caught and conveyed their proud strength and their dramatic nobility. Particularly fine was his playing of the fourth *Scherzo*, the only one in a major key. The *E major* and the famous *B flat minor* (the second of the series, Opus 39) are the most scherzo-like of the four.

As fine as Rubinstein's playing of this work is, Horowitz's performance is even finer. There is more variety of expression in the latter's reading, more nuance and more rhythmic subtlety. One senses a keener imagination behind his playing.

The piano tone here is unquestionably better than in the Rubinstein recording, yet not markedly so.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

LISZT: *Sonata in B minor*; played by Vladimir Horowitz. Victor set M-380, 3 discs, price \$6.50.

LISZT: *Funérailles (Harmonies poétiques et religieuses No. 7)*; played by Vladimir Horowitz. Victor disc No. 14515, price \$2.

FOR all his showiness and bathos, Liszt still most be accredited with attaining some extraordinary pianistic effects, and since both these works have their moments of nobility and grandeur it is appropriate that an artist of Horowitz's artistic prowess should play them in recordings.

Liszt's *Sonata* is a monumental work, unquestionably his greatest and most original contribution to the piano. It is not a sonata in the strict sense of the word, but a work based on a form of thematic development which Liszt termed "transformation of themes." There are four themes; the first, a descending scale figure, heard (three bars in length) in repetition at the beginning and immediately followed by the second, an energetic chordal motive, which opens what may be termed the first section of the sonata; the third, a staccato, repeated-note motive which is heard immediately after the previous theme; and the fourth, heard after an extended development (near the close of the first record face) a pompous, grandiose theme.

Funeral Processions has been aptly described as a study in pianistic sonorities. Some critics regard it as one of Liszt's most

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dramatically poetic piano compositions, but this is stretching the point somewhat since a great deal of this music is no more than dramatic pretense. However, under the hands of Horowitz, the music is never allowed to degenerate into mere bombast, and although it cannot be said that he actually vivifies those moments of empty pretense, it can be said that he gives a telling performance of this music. The first edition of this composition bore the date of 1849, a fact which has induced some writers to assume that Liszt composed it as an act of homage to Chopin, who died that year in Paris. One of Liszt's biographers, Lina Ramann, refutes this however, stating that the date on the first edition was a misprint and that the work was written in 1850 to the memory of three Hungarian noblemen who fell victims to the political upheaval in 1849.

Horowitz's performance of the sonata is a truly magnificent one. He plays it with fine masculine strength and rare poetic insight. The music's sentimentality is not unduly stressed and its virtuoso display is charged by him with an amazing degree of intensity. He makes the piano speak with true fervor and holds our attention with the splendor of his playing. Cortot's performance of this sonata did not realize its breadth and strength in a comparable manner. If a work like this is to live, surely it will live only in such a performance as Horowitz gives.

The recording here, dating back a few years, is still technically outstanding, even though it must be admitted that better results could be obtained today. —P. H. R.

* * * *

MOZART: *Variations on a Theme by Gluck*, K. 455 (3 sides); *Minuet in D major*, K. 355 and *Gigue in G major*, K. 574 (one side); played by Kathleen Long, pianist. Two discs, Musicraft Nos. 1051/2. Price \$3.00.

IN March, 1783 Mozart wrote a newsy letter to his father describing with gusto the success that had attended his recent concert. He played, he said, among other things a short fugue ("because the Emperor was there") and improvised variations on an aria by Gluck, *Unser dummer Pöbel meint*. It was these variations that he wrote down more than a year later (the manuscript is dated August 25, 1784).

These are not the simple transparent embellishments of a popular tune that usually passed for variations in Mozart's time. Mozart shortened Gluck's melody somewhat, probably to make it more malleable; using it as

a harmonic basis, his rich imagination evolved such delicate and truly varied metamorphoses as all but the first two variations are.

The two shorter pieces on the fourth side are interesting bits. The *Minuet*, probably composed in 1789 or 1790, contains two striking dissonances and some remarkable chromaticism. The antic *Gigue*, written in 1789, is laid out on Bachian lines (Mozart presented it to a Leipzig organist) and is a wonderfully clever little *tour de force*.

Kathleen Long plays the three pieces crisply and neatly. She has carefully avoided effects obtainable only on a modern grand piano, keeping her performance within an eighteenth-century frame. The piano has not been recorded here as well as in some other recent recordings. —N. B.

* * * *

SCHUBERT: *Sonata in B flat, Op. posthumous*; played by Ernst Victor Wolff, piano. Columbia set 311, price \$6.00.

ERNST VICTOR WOLFF makes his Columbia debut in music rather different from that which he has recorded for Musicraft and Gamut. This *Sonata* of Schubert figured on his recital program in New York's Town Hall this season, in fact it seems to be a favored work among pianists today, so that his performance of it holds an especial interest.

This composition is the last of a set of three *Sonatas* which Schubert composed shortly before he died, in fact according to some authorities these works were actually written on his deathbed. They were published a decade later by Diabelli, who added a dedication to Robert Schumann. In the *B Flat Sonata* we find many of the familiar Schubertian tricks — those modulations which never seem to fail in their power to bring tears no matter how often he used them, that incomparable flow of melody and the brief reminders of one or two of his songs. The question is how could a dying man write such simple and heartwarming music? After we have listened to the work we are apt to remember the haunting *Andante* with its organpoint and its superb middle section. All three of the other movements, especially the first, are effective and lovable, but it is in this slow movement that Schubert really touches greatness. Beethoven at his best never spoke more truly with the tongues of angels.

It is fortunate that Dr. Wolff also is at his best in this movement. The opening *Molto moderato* is rather mannered in his perform-

ance: his use of *rubato* would be more fitting in Chopin. Schubert doesn't need this. Like Mozart he calls for straight playing which allows him to speak for himself. In the *Andante sostenuto* Wolff lets him do this and he does it eloquently. The *Scherzo* has the requisite sparkle, and the whimsical final *Allegro* with its recurrent octave G is done in good style.

While the piano tone in this recording does not rank with the very best that has been done in recent months, it does strike a good average. This recording definitely lacks the virtues of Wolff's Musicraft records. The piano remains the most elusive instrument in the recording studios. Here the tone is on the thin side, especially in the climaxes. It is not comparable in quality to either the new Gieseeking or Petri recordings.

—P. M.

ORGAN

BACH: *Passacaglia in C minor*; played by Carl Weinrich on the organ of the Westminster Choir School, Princeton. Musicraft set 10, price \$3.00.

A NEW organ recording of the great Bach *Passacaglia and Fugue* has been badly needed, but considering the very recent developments in the reproduction of this difficult instrument, it was well worth while for Musicraft and Carl Weinrich to supply the deficiency. We have had the *Passacaglia* twice recorded in the popular Stokowski orchestration, and once in the Pochon arrangement for string quartet, and the only organ version was hardly calculated to please fastidious Bach lovers. I suppose that the doubt still remains among the experts as to whether Bach really intended this colossal work to be played on the organ or a harpsichord with a pedal board; the transcribers have plenty of good arguments in favor of their productions, and if this music is played on so modern an organ as that in Queen's Hall, London, as it was in the Dupré recording, the result is scarcely less of an arrangement than Mr. Pochon's interesting experiment. However all that may be, we now have a dignified recording of the *Passacaglia* so played on an instrument well suited to the music that we can listen in peace and contentment to the masterly accomplishment of Bach without being distracted by any added color.

Perhaps this is not the time to bring up again the endless discussion of the artistic justification of transcriptions, but I could not

help thinking after listening to Mr. Weinrich's performance that, although the proof of the music is in the hearing, and we can hardly deny that the Stokowski version is more immediately *effective*, in the end it is to such a performance as this that we must come to find the real Bach. And after making the acquaintance of the music in Stokowski's dramatic presentation, it will be hard for the layman to adjust himself to the smaller scale and the more subtle workmanship of Mr. Weinrich. As anybody knows sheer and unmitigated brilliance are the least enduring qualities in any work of art, and at the same time the most immediately appealing to the ordinary man. Without insinuating that Dr. Stokowski's merits can be summed up in these words, it remains a fact that his conception of Bach is far more spectacular than any organist can or has any right to make him. Therefore I recommend this new and authentic version to all who are learning to know the *Passacaglia*, and I beg of those who are familiar with it as an orchestral work that they take the time and have the patience to listen to these records until they become accustomed to its scale. It will be worth the try.

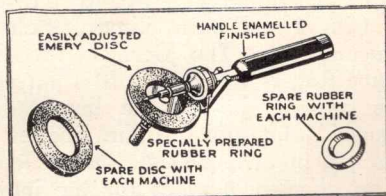
There is no lack of variety either in Bach's music or in Mr. Weinrich's playing. The



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passacaglia, as everyone must know, is a kind of elementary variation form on a ground bass, supposed to have originated as a Spanish dance. The architectural miracles which Bach worked in his treatment of this form remain among amazing things in music. The *Passacaglia* proper, which occupies the first two record sides, is a steady growth in intensity and rhythmic complication, culminating in the elaborate *Fugue* which occupies the second disc. Mr. Weinrich, by adroit use of variety in registration and by his heaven-sent gift of rhythm, builds to his climax simply and inevitably. And throughout this wonderful development he maintains a clarity and balance which may be a surprise to the admirers of the Stokowski version.

The booklet contains, besides notes on the music by Arthur Mendel, a reprint of Mr. Weinrich's remarks on the organ of Bach's time, which appeared first with his recording of the two *Trio Sonatas*. We are again given the specifications of the Aeolian-Skinner organ at Princeton on which all of the Weinrich records have been made.

—P. M.

VIOLIN

SZYMANOWSKI: *Chant de Roxane* (from *Le Roi Roger*) (arr. Kochanski); FALLA: *La Vida Breve-Danse espagnole* (arr. Kreisler); played by Jascha Heifetz, with piano by Emanuel Bay. Victor disc, No. 14625 price \$2.00.

THE late Karol Szymanowski seems by way of becoming a great favorite with violinists, who have been enlarging their repertoire of late. The selection here presented introduces his opera *König Roger* to discs, and provides Heifetz with some highly appreciated opportunities to display the beauty and intensity of his tone. The air is a dreamy and soaring affair with a well-built climax, taken from the second act. The German text begins "Träume Rogers von Blut." It is played here in the transcription by the lamented Paul Kochanski, who took all the liberties usual in this sort of arrangement, and made of the song an effective number for the inevitable miscellaneous group at the end of a violin recital.

The companion piece is not so novel. Sooner or later, it seems, every great violinist gets around to recording the *Dance* from *La Vida Breve*. In this guise the music loses some of its original breathless drama and becomes a virtuoso piece, pure and simple. Heifetz long ago set his own standards of

fancy fiddling, standards which few of his contemporaries can so much as approach. He maintains them here, with the aid of the capable Mr. Bay and the HMV recording engineers.

—P. M.

HARP

SIBELIUS: *Pastorale*; and PROKOFIEFF: *Prelude in C*; played by Mildred Dilling, harpist. Columbia disc, 10-inch disc, No. 17107-D, price \$1.00.

MISS DILLING has chosen two unusual and worth-while selections for us this month. The first is a transcription of the *Pastorale* from Sibelius's small orchestra suite of incidental music for *Pelleas and Melisande* (Op. 46, No. 6). The suite as a whole is said not to reflect the spirit of the Maeterlinck play, but to have so strong a Finnish flavor that Sibelius himself re-arranged and changed the titles of several of the numbers for his piano album of *Sibeliana*. As a fresh addition to the recorded Sibelius repertoire this dainty *Pastorale* is assured a warm welcome.

The Prokofieff *Prelude in C* (Op. 12, No. 7), for piano or harp, is conservative Prokofieff. The form is simple and the harmonies have only mild touches of modernism. It is almost a novelty when a harpist, Miss Dilling or any of the others, deigns to play music that was conceived with the harp in mind.

—A. P. D.

VOICE

OPERATIC ARIAS SUNG BY LUCREZIA

BORI: MOZART: *Nozze di Figaro* - *Giunse alfin il momento* (*Deh vieni, non tardar*); *Don Giovanni* - *Batti, batti, o bel Masetto*; *Don Giovanni* - *Vedrai, carino*; FALLA: *La Vida Breve* - *Vivan los que rien*; PUC-CINI: *La Rondine* - *Ore dolci e divine*; WOLF-FERRARI: *Il Segreto di Susanna* - *Oh goia, la nubbe leggera*; MASSENET: *Manon* - *Adieu, notre petite table*; *Manon* - *Cavotte*; with orchestra conducted by Frank Black. Victor set M-405, price \$7.50

OF course it would be futile to deny that Lucrezia Bori's voice has lost something of its velvet since her last previous recording session, but it would be equally useless to try to persuade her admirers (and who is not an admirer of Bori?) that this valedictory album should not have been made. For years, now, we have been regretting her absence from the studios, and wishing that this or that aria which she had recorded with especial

success by the old acoustic process had been redone so that we might enjoy her singing with a credible orchestral background. It would appear that Victor has had somewhat the same idea, since this little recital contains several of the desired selections.

In the accompanying booklet (which includes, praise be, the text and translation of the scenes presented, but which could have been more carefully edited) Miss Bori tells us that the recordings include "the arias I have best loved to sing." Perhaps in this statement the artist has given us the key to her success—for these are precisely the arias to which she is best suited by temperament and nature. Throughout her long career Bori has experienced few failures—I cannot remember one in all of the many times I have heard her sing. She was always well cast at the opera because she had the discernment to choose her roles wisely. And here, on these four discs, are souvenirs of several of the operas in which we most gratefully remember her. There are others, of course, which have been omitted, but if *Mélisande* and *Fiora* are missing from this little portrait gallery, there is plenty to be thankful for.

I think a word of warning should be given in regard to the recording. In these days of high fidelity there are so many machines which are not equipped for the latest in reproduction that it is well to be cautious in buying, especially vocal records. The voice in this set has been amplified, rather at the expense of its quality, and careful manipulation of the volume control will be found necessary on any machine. (A fibre needle may be found more satisfactory than a steel one.) Otherwise the set represents quite truthfully the Bori of today. Always a singer of immaculate taste, she has a style which is as individual as it is musical, and it is for this that these new recordings are principally valuable.

Owners of the old records of several of these selections will occasionally find in the new versions a somewhat different musical treatment. Her *Deh vieni, non tardar* was always a delight, not only because of the steady lilt she put into it, but because her timing permitted the inclusion of the recitative. The new disc has slightly less of the lilt, but the recitative is again included, and sung to perfection. It might be noted here that she sings the *appoggiatures* in the recitative, though not in the aria, and that she follows the tradition of including the rather unfortunate little *cadenza* with the high B-flat at the end. I have always wished for a *Batti, batti* by Bori, and its arrival causes renewed

regret that she never sang *Zerlina* at the Metropolitan. The new *Vedrai, carino* has the principal virtues of her old one and an added one of greater nuance.

The selections from *La vida breve* and *La Rondine* (both new to recording) bring us the soprano in two of the operas which have been particularly identified with her name, and the one from *Il Segreto di Susanna* replaces one of her happiest efforts which was made in 1921. There is less of joy and more of contemplation in the new performance, but the aria benefits enormously by the modern accompaniment.

The late W. J. Henderson called Bori the finest *Manon* the Metropolitan had ever known, and it is good to have the two scenes from Massenet's opera which round out the set. The *cantabile* of *Adieu, notre petite table* is Bori at her best, and the *Gavotte* is a demonstration of this artist's particular brand of vocal neatness. If you listen after the end of the latter you will hear Miss Bori express her own approval. She had every reason to do so, not only for her own part, but for the cooperation of Frank Black and his orchestra.

—P. M.

* * * *

Songs from THE AMERICAN SONG BAG: *Gallows Song* ("Sam Hall"); *I Ride an Old Paint*; *Foggy, Foggy Dew*; *The Horse Named Bill*; *I'm Sad and I'm Lonely*; *Woven Spirituals*; *The Good Boy*; *Mama Have You Heard the News?*; sung by Carl Sandburg to his own guitar accompaniment. Four 10-inch records, Nos. 207-210, Musicraft Album No. 11, price \$4.50.

THROUGH his book, "*The American Song-Bag*" (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) and his singing, Carl Sandburg has made American folk song a reality to many groups of people. It is fitting that he has recorded this album of folk song, the first folk song recordings in this country to escape the hill-billy list.

Mr. Sandburg is not a professional singer for which we may be thankful. Properly speaking he is not a folk singer and he is certainly not a "hillbilly artist". His approach to folk songs is conditioned by two factors: he is a poet, and he has sung folk songs in his many personal appearances on the lecture platform. Both the strength and the weaknesses of these records lie in these facts.

Sandburg's singing is a remarkable example of dramatic interpretation. By this I mean that he goes back of the song to the meaningful content and then conveys in his

singing the emotion implicit in the situation. In listening to the magnificent cowboy song *I Ride An Old Paint* one realizes the dramatic progress in its three stanzas — in the first stanza we have the direct narrative, of a simple man; the second stanza gives us the complexities and misfortunes of life which lead perfectly into the third verse where the singer thinks of death.

In *Sam Hall* Sandburg is very right that the situation of a man about to hang has the terror and hatred he gives it in his singing. (The English folk version of this song conveys this in text and melody.) But this interpretation is not justified in this case because *Sam Hall* is a conscious reworking by a music hall artist of the original folk song. By going back to the fundamental meaning, Mr. Sandburg ignores the fact that the song is already an interpretation. As a poet he has the privilege to rewrite something and make it his own; as a singer his duty is not to convey an emotion incommensurate with the song he sings. Neither of these two songs has the emotionally-simple tuneful directness which is a quality so prominent and impressive in American folk singing. The same songs done by Tex Ritter on thirty-five cent records, the first for Perfect, the second on Decca, are better versions for this reason.

Two other songs, *The Horse Named Bill*, and *The Good Boy*, are unfortunate selections for this album. Both are humorous songs and may have a limited currency in this country which justifies their inclusion in a large representative collection, but in this small group they get an undue importance. There are too many good songs that need recording.

For the remaining songs I have nothing but praise. Mr. Sandburg counterbalances his choice of *Sam Hall* by giving a delightful folk version of the railroad song best known by its vaudeville descendant "Casey Jones". Here the singing brings to life those qualities that print cannot capture. The song *Foggy, Foggy Dew* is sung in a way that gives us its tender humor and charm. Most impressive poetically and musically is the mountain song *I'm Sad and Lonely*. It is a fascinating composite of bits from other folk songs here welded into a new and genuinely moving whole. The theme is the unfaithfulness of young men who, we learn, tell more lies "than the cross-ties on the railroad" and leave the woman behind feeling "sad and lonely". The Negro spirituals live up to the high standard set on Mr. Sandburg's only Victor record.

Both Musicraft and Carl Sandburg are to be congratulated for the start they have made with this album. The recording of the singer

and his excellent guitar playing are indeed startlingly true to life. Mr. Sandburg must learn that recording requires a different technique from that of the personal appearance. Certain mannerisms, such as pausing before words in order to create suspense, are effective on the platform but fail on records since the singer's personal appearance is not there to carry them. But with these minor changes we could ask for nothing better (until the day when actual folk singers are recorded) than that Mr. Sandburg continue recording songs from the rich collection in "The American Songbag".

—Herbert Halpert.

* * * *

DELIBES: *Lakme, Bell-Song*; and *O Dourga Bionda*; sung by Miliza Korjus, with orchestra. Victor 12136, price \$2.00.

IT was inevitable that Miliza Korjus would produce her version of the *Bell-Song*, and she does it in her finest form. For such startling brilliance of style and execution, for such bravado in tackling the fireworks of the upper reaches we have to go back to the superb display records of Tetrazzini. No other singer of the day gives herself so wholeheartedly to the exuberances of the coloratura style. Korjus gives a cut version of the aria, but retains all the essential music.

The reverse side carries an air that we seldom hear, Lakme's *Prayer* at the beginning of the opera. The intervals, suggesting Oriental music, are cruel for a singer, but Korjus sings them with mechanical accuracy. Her ease in taking and holding the high B flats is a cause for wonderment. The voice soars triumphantly over the chorus of Hindus.

The recording is meticulously clean.

—A. P. D.

* * * *

HANDEL: *Dank sei dir, Herr (Arioso)* (arr. Ochs; *Julius Caesar—Es blaut die Nacht*; sung by Gerhard Hüsch, baritone, with Berlin State Opera Orchestra, direction of Hanns Udo Müller. Victor disc, No. 12090, price \$1.50.

THE famous *Arioso* from Handel's nameless *Cantata con stromenti* has been an amazingly long time in reaching the modern Victor catalogue. Very popular with the recorders abroad, it has only twice before figured in the domestic lists — once many years ago in an acoustic Victor disc by Julia Culp, who, if I am not mistaken, introduced it in this country, and more recently in a version by Emmi Leisner repressed from the Polydor master by the Brunswick Company. It is, therefore, unfortunate that this performance

by Gerhard Hüsch should be a less wonderful thing than we had a right to expect.

The *Cantata con stromenti* is among the more or less recently discovered works of Handel, and it is not contained in the "complete" Handel-Gesellschaft edition. The *Arioso* was interpolated by Siegfried Ochs into a performance of *Israel in Egypt*, and was popularized in that conductor's arrangement. I do not know whether the text as we have long known it was in the original *Cantata*, or whether Ochs adapted it to suit his needs: I do know that if the latter supposition is true, this is an unusually successful case of fitting words to music. The broad and dignified melody is perfectly suited to the expression of thanks to the Lord for delivering Israel from the Egyptians, and leading them safely through the sea. Now, supposedly for political reasons, this text has been altered, and Hüsch sings the purely "Aryan" version. Perhaps he is a little ashamed of the procedure, for his generally good diction is somewhat cloudy here, and it took me several playings to determine what he was singing about. But what could he do with words so obviously shoe-horned into the music? It may be well to add that the authenticity of the *Arioso* has been questioned by Handel experts.

From the point of view of stylistic singing the best record of *Dank sei dir, Herr* is still that of Julia Culp, though of course the recording dates from 1916. Emmi Leisner's is impressive and vocally opulent, but it would be better if she had taken fewer liberties with the vocal line. A Telefunken disc by Eva Liebenberg reveals a voice not unlike Leisner's, and a style a bit less bored. These are the best versions I know, though the music seems to call for a male voice. The Schlusnus performance is one of his least satisfactory efforts, and this one of Hüsch, though done in good style, is ruined by the text.

Es blaut die Nacht is a translation of the aria *V'adaro, pupille* made by Oskar Hagen for his German revival of *Giulio Cesare* in Göttingen in 1922. It is sung in the opera by Cleopatra, but I suppose Mr. Hüsch can justify his baritone voice by pointing out the fact that the role of Caesar was written for a soprano. In any case his singing is rather heavy and dull, and he does a little rewriting in the last line. A more convincing Cleopatra (though still not a soprano) is presented by Mme. Liebenberg on the reverse side of the Telefunken disc mentioned above.

Mr. Hüsch's accompanist, Hanns Udo Müller, conducts the Berlin State Opera Orchestra in the accompaniments. —P. M.

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(Continued on Page 359)

MENDELSSOHN: *Nachtlied*; *Minnelied*; *Neue Liebe*; sung by Ernst Wolff, baritone, accompanying himself at the piano. Ten-inch Columbia disc, No. 4177-M, price \$1.00.

IN our admiration for more exciting composers we are apt to forget the very real and positive merits of Mendelssohn. I suppose he has himself to thank for writing the *Songs without words* by which he is most generally known and judged. As a *lieder* composer, however, he is not to be so lightly overlooked, for there are a number of fine songs buried away in his works. Of course everybody knows *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* (though it be more often fiddled than sung) and the moving *Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rath* (which still needs recording) but I doubt if many people in this country know any more of Mendelssohn's songs. This little selection will serve as an opening.

The text of the *Nachtlied*, Op. 71, No. 6, is a characteristically atmospheric poem of Eichendorf, and it has been set with real feeling and understanding by the composer. It is a song of restlessness sung at the close of day by one who longs for companionship, and who finally calls upon the nightingale and the waterfall to join him in the praise of the Lord. The quiet opening is marked by a six-measure organpoint which recurs at intervals throughout the song, giving it a fine feeling of unity. Wolff sings the lied with care and devotion, though there is momentary evidence of insufficient breath near the beginning and some uncertain intonation. He rises well to the climax, but I would have preferred an unbroken phrase at the end.

The two songs on the reverse of the record are splendidly done. The *Minnelied*, Op. 47, No. 1, to words by Tieck, addresses various aspects of nature, none of which can equal the beloved one. This song has real life and tenderness. Heine's *Neue Liebe*, Op. 19, No. 4, is the song of one who has seen the elves, and has been charmed by the queen—"Is this my new love," he says, "or does it mean death?" This miniature is worthy of the composer of the *Midsummer night's dream*, and Wolff gives it with the proper light airiness. This is one of the singer's best efforts.

—P. M.

* * * *

MILHAUD: *Trois opéra-minutes*: *L'Enlèvement d'Europe*; *L'Abandon d'Ariane*; *La Délivrance de Thésée*; sung by the Ensemble Instrumental et Vocal "Pro Musica"; Mme. Bathori, mezzo-soprano; J. Planel,

tenor; G. Petit, baritone; J. Hazart, basso; M. Brega, soprano; Mme. Valencin, soprano; direction of Darius Milhaud. Columbia set 309, three discs, price \$3.00.

WITH such a variety of Milhaud's works available on Columbia records there is little excuse today for ignorance of his music. He is perhaps the most versatile of the modern Frenchmen, and for that reason, if for no other, in my opinion he is the most important of them. For one man to have written his *Piano concerto*, the *Orestie d'Eschyle*, the three *Opéras-minutes* and *La création du monde* is surely no mean accomplishment, for each one of these compositions stands squarely on its own merits, yet they are all bound together by that something which we call "style" or "individuality."

These "opera-sketches" like the *Orestie* music, are based on ancient Greek mythology, yet they present a most amusing contrast to the stark tragedy of the older work. The texts by Henri Hoppenot tell the stories of Europa, Theseus and Ariadne, with almost unbelievable brevity and from a modern and rather facetious point of view. Still there is a certain good humor and directness about them which saves them from degenerating into pure farce. The complete aural set-up of grand opera is here. There is real characterisation in the solo vocal parts, and the chorus fulfills its original function in Greek drama, that of commenting on the action and making up for the lack of scenery.

Musically these scores show again the admirable craftsmanship of the composer. Listeners to whom atonality is still anathema had better avoid these operas, as well as the bulk of Milhaud's work, though in the year 1937 this should not bother so many of us. Less sensitive souls who still love lyricism will find plenty here to please them. Milhaud is enough of a master to convince us that whatever he does is done with a purpose, so that we accept such things as the two-key ending of *L'Enlèvement d'Europe* even before we can justify them. It cannot be denied that those who do not understand the French text must lose a great deal of the pith of these operas, but to anyone interested in modern music they are too important to be overlooked.

L'Enlèvement d'Europe introduces us to Europa, daughter of Agenor, who prefers the society of a bull to that of her hero-suitor Pergamum. The suitor tries to shoot the bull, but his arrow is deflected and the animal (who turns out to be Jupiter in disguise) dashes into the sea with the maiden on his

back. This is perhaps the most appealing of the operas, and the easiest to follow.

The scene of *L'Abandon d'Ariane* is laid on the isle of Naxos, where Theseus, his young wife Ariadne and her sister Phaedra have been shipwrecked. Ariadne would now like to be rid of her husband, while Phaedra sighs for his love. The two sisters give alms to a beggar who is in reality Dionysius, thus each meriting a reward. Dionysius gives Theseus a drink, and so succeeds in transferring the hero's affections to the sister who loves him. Ariadne, at her own request, is transformed into a constellation.

The same family figures in *La Délivrance de Thésée*. Phaedra now makes love to her step-son Hippolytus while Theseus is off at the wars. Finding that Hippolytus favors Arctina, Phaedra betrays him to her husband, who has him destroyed. Theramenses, a friend of Hippolytus, takes his revenge by killing Phaedra.

Like others in the series of recordings of modern French works made by French Columbia and recently given belated release by the domestic company, these recordings sound amazingly well today, if not equal to the latest standards. The performances are excellent throughout, being under the direction of the composer, and surely no one will quibble over the somewhat restricted range of the reproduction. Of course the job could be done better today, but it is not likely to be, so we may be thankful for the opportunity to obtain the records as they are.

—P. M.

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SCHUMANN: *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48; sung by Charles Panzéra, baritone, with piano by Alfred Cortot. Victor set M-386, price \$6.50.

IF *Dichterliebe* is not the greatest of Schumann's song cycles (some claim that distinction for the Eichendorf *Liederkreis*) it is certainly the most thoroughly logical and carefully integrated of them. The claims of its rival are based upon the individual songs which rise, so its supporters tell us, to heights greater than those of the *Dichterliebe*, but I don't suppose that there are many who will dispute the fact that the cumulative effect of the cycle is stronger here. This is due in no small measure to the device (used also in *Frauenliebe und Leben*) of building a postlude for the final song out of thematic material which has been heard earlier in the cycle, but the psychological sequence of the songs is another not inconsiderable factor.

RECORD BUYERS' GUIDE

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NEW YORK CITY

Center Music Store
RCA Bldg., Rockefeller Center

NEW YORK CITY

The Gramophone Shop
18 East 48th Street

NEW YORK CITY

Haynes - Griffin
373 Madison Ave., at 46th St.

NEW YORK CITY

G. Schirmer, Inc.
3 East 43rd Street

NEW YORK CITY

N. Y. Band Instrument Company
111 East 14th Street

NEW YORK CITY

Rabson's Record Shop
100 West 56th Street

NEW YORK CITY

Record Exchange
812 — 7th Ave., at 53rd St.

NEW YORK CITY

Harry Sultan's Record Shop
26 East 23rd Street

NEW YORK CITY

The Symphony Shop
251 West 42nd Street

NEW YORK CITY

Vesey Music Shop
67 Vesey Street

RICHMOND HILL, N. Y.

International Records Agency
P. O. Box 171 (Mail orders only)

CLEVELAND, Ohio

G. Schirmer Music Co.
43-45 The Arcade

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

H. Royer Smith Co.
10th and Walnut Streets

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

The Record Shop
247 South 15th Street

PITTSBURGH, Pa.

C. C. Mellor Co.
604 Wood Street

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Dichterliebe was based upon selections from Heine's *Buch der Lieder*. The cycle dates from 1840, Schumann's big year of bursting love for Clara and his unparalleled outpouring of songs. Published in 1844, the songs were dedicated to the celebrated singer, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient.

The name of Schumann will always stand for the highest degree of romanticism, and these songs may be taken to typify the great 19th-century movement at its best. In them we find, as never in the *lieder* which preceded them, complete and uninhibited intimacy on the part of the composer as well as the poet. There is, to be sure, no set or specified story in the sequence, but a skeleton upon which many an unhappy romance may be reconstructed. Just as it is the aim of an actor to make each member of his audience identify himself with the character he is portraying, so Schumann succeeds in causing the sensitive listener to read more or less of his own life into these songs. This, I take it, was the goal of the romantics.

Schumann was one of the great pioneers among *lieder* composers, and though he had a very real and potent leaning toward the song, his instincts were sometimes better than his technique in this very specialized field of music. Word-setting is an art all of itself, and requires an understanding and ability not altogether musical. Schumann did not find the complete solution for its problems, but often sidestepped the issues by altering the poet's text. He did not learn the secret of musical freedom which makes it possible for the words to dictate the form of a song, but was still bound by the purely musical conventions of his day. He was remarkably careless, too, or perhaps rather bold in the manner in which he changed a word here and there, sometimes without any apparently good reason. Nevertheless, the warm humanity, the searching understanding and the inescapable sincerity of these songs of *Poet's Love* far outweigh any criticism, and the cycle is full of masterly detail.

It is good to find this truly important work on Victor's special list, and it is gratifying, after comparing three recordings, to be able to say that this performance by Panzéra and Cortot is easily the best. Naturally, when one gets to know such songs as these, it becomes practically impossible for a performance to be completely satisfactory, but this one comes as near perfection as any one is likely to hear.

The first complete recording of *Dichterliebe* was made by a Dutch baritone, the late

Thom Denijs for HMV. Mechanically a fairly satisfactory set in its day, the reproduction now sounds a bit thin. What is more serious, the singer's disregard of such things as dotted notes was always annoying enough to counterbalance to some extent his evident feeling for the songs, and the generally good quality of his voice.

The other HMV set by Gerhard Hüsch was, if I am not mistaken, recorded more recently than that of Panzéra. The subtleties of the cycle seem to be too much for this admirable though robust singer, and one feels that he is miscast in this type of music. In his effort to soften the quality of his tone he succeeds in producing a beautiful sound, but not in adhering strictly to the key. The general impression is one of restraint rather than quiet expression, and even in the stormiest of the songs, his singing does not carry much conviction. Hüsch has much better things to his credit; and for that matter so has his accompanist, Hanns Udo Müller.

The voice of Charles Panzéra has just the qualities we miss in that of Hüsch. Of a naturally soft texture, it fits beautifully into the moods of the music. And, lest there be any doubt on the subject, his German diction is excellent, the only considerable fault being a habit of chopping off the ends of words. There may be spots here and there where we may prefer Denijs or Hüsch, but the large average is easily with Panzéra.

And another reason for the success of this set is the playing of Alfred Cortot. There is some disagreement at the outset as to the pace of *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* but after that the two musicians work together admirably. This first song does not quite come off in any of the three sets, nor does the extremely difficult *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'*, with its magnificently understated climax, and its devastating canonic postlude. Only Panzéra realizes the Gothic grandeur of *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome* — though credit there belongs largely to Cortot. The French baritone is best, too, in the bitter *Ich grolle nicht*, even if he does not make us forget the recording of this song by the octogenarian Sir George Henschel. Cortot is magnificent in the angry outburst at the end of *Und wüsten's die Blumen*, in the piano solo which forms the background of *Es ist ein Flöten und Geigen*, and in the biting *Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen*. The success of *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* also is due no less to the pianist than to the singer.

—P. M.

Record Collectors' Corner

By JULIAN MORTON MOSES

AN OPEN LETTER TO P. G. HURST, Esq.

(In reply to his letter in the November, 1937 issue)

New Collectors' Releases

Dear Sir:

A great debt is owed you by record collectors for having in the *Collectors' Corner* of *The Gramophone* given form, impetus, and direction to the pleasant and *once innocent* pursuit of collecting records. To be sure the frantic listing of "60c stars" which now flourishes is in some ways to be regretted. Yet it is certainly curious that you brand these Nationalist groups "even parochial." For you were not known as a broadening influence. As a matter of fact, your readers on this side of the Atlantic have been considered you a definite reactionary, and a highly opinionated person. With you, at first, only a few discs published in England were considered worthy of serious consideration. Later, you announced all valuable masters were destroyed: yet now we have new Maurels, Lehmanns and Litvinnes appearing almost monthly. But when record collecting grew so far flung it could no longer be governed from Soho there was the usual revolution. With the inevitable displacement of the original leader. And it is only the way of an ungrateful world that your fine contributions were quickly forgotten.

It strikes me that had you not repudiated every record issued after a certain mystic date, fixed upon by you, and the change of a label, you might still be "at the helm" of the craft. You speak of "a pure artistic and antiquarian cult." But surely you do not think these two words synonymous?

In reading your column, I used to wonder what you would do if faced with the predicament of a Christine Nilsson cylinder—only useful if re-recorded upon a brand new record with a brand new label, and a number embossed instead of etched. It is all a tempest in a teapot!

You will undoubtedly agree with me that record collecting should be pursued from one of two points of view—the antiquarian *or* the artistic. Art is long and time is fleeting, and Kirsten Flagstad in 1937 is a greater singer than Hamilton Earle was in 1902. Yet recognition by the world is no sure sign of intrinsic worth. Perhaps buried under a "60c label" may be found a singer of greater artistic stature than some who shone resplendent on a De Luxe label. Who is to say? We must judge for ourselves!

Personally I remember your repudiation of Calvé's Pathé records; your depreciation of Eugenia Mantelli, a singer of great repute and undoubted artistic value. Maybe you were led into this error because she appeared on Zonophone, and again possibly because she never sang at that Temple of Art, Covent Garden — or did she?

One cannot assume the position of sirdar or expect the world at large to accept blindly (or should I say *deafly*?) one's own valuation of a singer.

Your desire that no copies of one of your catalogues—or was it records?—leave England for the United States was unfortunate. I think that this wish lost you many friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Any person who would most love and cherish a record deserved it most — whether he be English, German, Dutch, Swedish or even American. And in the purely commercial venture of selling published works for hard cash (cash is very hard) this sentimental scruple seemed strangely out of place.

It will be interesting to read articles from various countries in *The Gramophone*. The Record Collectors' Corner in that magazine, in my opinion, has long needed a wider expanse of territory.

The records of Helene Noldi are Black label and unlisted in any collectors' catalogue. The *Vilia Song* from *The Merry Widow* (circa 1906) is sung, in my estimation, with a pure Marchesi method that would make the fortune of any singer today. She was a "60c star." I know nothing of her career, nor even of her nationality. Yet it would doubtless be "parochial" of me to clamor for her admittance into the august company of singers who boast the aegis of your approval. Let me repeat — it is all a tempest in a tea pot!

Sincerely yours,

Ira Glackens

New York: 5 December 1937

RECORD BUYERS' GUIDE

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READING, Pa.

Wittich's
635 Penn Street

CHARLESTON, W. Va.

Galparin Music Co.
17 Capitol Street

MILWAUKEE, Wisconsin

Helen Gunnis Record Shop
226 East Mason Street

LONDON, W. C. 2, England

Rimington, Van Wyck, Ltd.
42/43 Cranborn Street

All shops listed in the Record Buyers' Guide are fully endorsed by The AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER and are equipped to take excellent care of your record requirements.

ANOTHER pair of re-pressings from the highly interesting group of cylinders by Blanche Arral ushers in the new year for the International Record Collectors' Club. As before, there is an excerpt from French opera, the *Perle du Bresil* aria, which, though done by many others, boasts no more spirited or full-blooded embodiment than here. Also, we have again a lighter selection, much too inconsequential in fact, in a *Snake Waltz*, no less, from Audran's *Le Grand Mogul*. This side is a disappointment considering the success which Mme. Arral enjoyed in this genre. Mechanically speaking, the re-recording, particularly of the first side, is exceptionally good though the swish of the cylinder machine still provides an unscored accompaniment. This is a 12-inch disc, IRCC No. 112, price \$2.25, autographed.

On another 12-inch disc, IRCC No. 113, price \$2.25, we have two great favorites from Victor's endless lists of rarities. De Gogorza sings Rigoletto's monologue, *Pari siamo*, on one side (which he also autographs) and is joined by his one-time spouse, Emma Eames, in another Verdian selection, *Mira d'acerbe lagrime*, from *Il Trovatore* on the reverse side. Both artists sing with tremendous verve and, most frequently, good tone. The style likewise is remarkable, especially when Mr. De Gogorza presents a buffoon who is melodramatic, pensive, pathetic and, except for an explosive "folia" at the end, perfectly sung at the same time. We wish Mr. Tibbett would study this record, but we suspect that it would take more than that to teach him how to sing this exacting role. The Leonora-Di Luna duet is cut to make room for the *Vivra contende il giubilo* but is otherwise in keeping with the score and tradition of the piece.

Pol Plancon is afforded a well justified reissue of his *Sonnambula*, *Vi ravviso*, and *Don Carlos*, *Elle ne m'aime pas*, which constitute IRCC No. 49, a 12-inch disc, price \$2.25. Containing two famous arias in their original languages by the greatest of all recorded basses, this record should be bought by everyone who does not already own it.

The current addition to the International Record Collectors' series of Odeon-Fonotipia repressings presents Emmy Destinn in a German version of Alice's *Romance* from the history-making opus of Meyerbeer, *Robert, le Diable*, a 10¾-inch disc, price \$2.00. Destinn's Odeon records were unquestionably her finest and this is no exception.

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All the attention of the Historic Record Society is directed this month towards taking extravagant advantage of their valuable contact with the Parlophone Company which now holds the right to all matrices of the illustrious Societa Italiana di Fonotipia whose magnificent contribution during the decade beginning with 1910 has been extolled at length in these columns. Items long thought out of any possible reach, if they existed at all, are now offered us at the most reasonable prices and, for all but the rabid devotees of original labels, collecting has thus been made a much more enjoyable indulgence.

The first of the releases, HRS No. 1017, a 10¾-inch disc, price \$2.25, contains a duet, *Ma dunque e vero*, from *Adriana Lecouvreur*, sung by Adelina Stehle and Edoardo Garbin and the romanza *Io sono l'umile ancella* from the same opera sung by Salomea Krusceniski. If the masters used were the same as those of the records we possess (Nos. 3911 and 92088) the first is with piano accompaniment and the second with orchestra. Neither Stehle nor her husband comes off well though the recording catches some of what must have been great artistry on her

part. Krusceniski, on the other hand, sings with a fire that is more in keeping with so famous a name.

The second offering is that of Eugenio Giraldoni singing the *Credo* from *Otello* coupled with *O luce di quest' amina* from Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* as sung by Rosina Storchio, HRS No. 1018, a 10¾-inch disc, price \$2.25. We have heard neither of the sides but if the creators of Scarpia and Butterfly respectively are half as great as their fame, this ought to be a valuable collector's disc.

Finally, there is announced a coupling, HRS. No. 1019, a 10¾-inch disc, price \$2.25, by Rose Caron, whose work looms so important in the annals of the Paris Opera that is a wonder and a shame that none of her original Fonotipia records, of which this will be a re-pressing, has yet turned up. The titles as well as a more extensive criticism will be given in a later review.

SWING MUSIC NOTES

by

ENZO ARCHETTI

SINCE the possibility of an Ellington concert is still remote, the next best substitute in point of interest is the Benny Goodman concert to be held at Carnegie Hall on Sunday evening, January 16th. It will be presented by S. Hurok and it is advertised as the "first swing concert in the history of Carnegie Hall." In fact, it is. Every other presentation of jazz at Carnegie Hall up to now—beginning with the historic Paul Whiteman concert in 1924 — has been of the so-called "symphonic" type. It is regrettable that the honor of presenting the first swing concert in Carnegie Hall did not fall to the most significant figure in American jazz and one of swing's greatest exponents—Duke Ellington. But, of course, from an advertising point of view a better substitute than Benny Goodman could hardly have been chosen. Benny is certainly the most glamorous figure in jazz today. And swing *can* use some intelligent advertising.

The concert promises to be a very interesting one. Benny Goodman and his entire orchestra will be there. And, for good measure, so will the Trio and Quartet. These two groups will no doubt present the best swing music of the evening as they have proven they can on various other occasions and on records. Just what will be played is not yet known but, whatever the program, it will certainly be interesting and exciting.

The circular advertising the concert is worthy of quoting: "From Louisiana's swampland a trumpet blared and a clarinet screamed to trapdrum syncopation. Critics thought it vulgar, cacophonous, and scowlingly called it jazz.

"The infant idiom begged at the door of musical America. Refused admittance to the homes of pundits it swirled clamorously into the life of the common man.

"Still yearning for acceptance by the tutored, it became 'sweet' and 'symphonic' in turn, a traitor to its origins.

"Losing finally its inferiority complex, it surged forward again, flying its own colors, but with a new name, 'swing'. Despite the mysticists, swing is jazz grown mature and strong. Its orchestrations and polyrhythmic structure have earned the admiration of such musicians as Stravinsky and Stokowski.

"Said Olin Downes recently: 'Real jazz is an intensely creative thing. It is full of improvisations, of life bubbling up in music from musicians who feel it.'

"Benny Goodman is a musician who 'feels it'. Foremost among swing musicians, the leading innovator in America today of swing, (N.B. — the present writer does not necessarily concur with this statement, though he quotes it here) and himself one of the world's greatest virtuosi of the clarinet, Benny Goodman and his orchestra will give, under the pioneering auspices of S. Hurok, the first concert of swing music in the history of Carnegie Hall.

"He will render music which is the daily stimulus of fifty millions of American, — music which centuries from now will be unquestionably called American folk-music compositions which are as indigenous to this life as a Bach passacaglia is to the eighteenth century."

This is a concert no one interested in American music, and jazz in particular can afford to miss. What seats will be left by the time this appears in print will be on sale at the Carnegie Hall box office at prices ranging from 85 cents up.

The appearance of the Saturday Night Swing Club Orchestra under Leith Stevens, with Maxine Sullivan, Joe Sogja, and Les Lieber, as soloists, at Loew's State Theatre in New York was undoubtedly successful. It served to introduce to swing enthusiasts in general the musicians who, up to then, had been known only as sounds on the radio. But to this writer the personal appearance was not a success. It lacked the spontaneity, the intimacy of the radio studio. The musicians and the guest artists were all a little self-conscious and restrained. They didn't quite relax as they should.

Tommy Dorsey has at last filled the chair vacated by Red Bone with Earl Hagen, a trombonist of the first water . . . Maurice Purtill, drummer, and Stevie Pletcher, trumpeter, have been released from Red Norvo's band. Their successors have not yet been named. It is rumored that Red Norvo's group will soon fill the spot at the Pennsylvania Hotel . . . Bobby Hackett, that trumpet man from up Boston way who sounds like Bix, is now with a group at Nick's, the musicians' haunt in Greenwich Village . . . Toots Mondello, first rate sax man of the Saturday Night Swing Club Orchestra has started his own band which he says will be "not swing," "not sweet", but "just musical" . . . Sonny Dunham, trumpet, has rejoined the Casa Loma Orchestra . . . Cab Calloway and Chick Webb have exchanged sax men: Garwin Bushell is now with Chick and Chauncey Haughton with Cab . . . Charlie Spivak, trumpet, has rejoined Bob Crosby's group . . . Duke Oliver's swingsters returned to Harlem's Alhambra Ballroom on Christmas night . . . The Master and Variety labels are definitely through. The December Brunswick and Vocalion supplements list practically the whole Master output and most of Variety's. All of Ellington's records are now available under the new labels except those originally issued as the Gotham Stompers. In the transition, the Bigard-Ellington composition issued on Variety VA 564 as *Solace* had its name changed to *Lament for a Lost Love* (Vocalion 3820) . . . An apartment house recently completed in a fashionable part of London was named *Ellington Court*. The news of the dedication was sent to Duke Ellington with a standing invitation: that a suite was always ready for him whenever he visited London.

In the Popular Vein

By HORACE VAN NORMAN

Standard Popular

AAAA—*Moanin' In the Mornin'*, and *Down With Love*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25692.

One of the most promising tune writers of a few years back was Harold Arlen. Having a vein of fresh, original melodic ideas, he turned out with quite remarkable consistency work that was practically ignored and which, when at its best, as in *Stormy Weather* and several of the Cotton Club scores, was very close to being the best music turned out by any one of our younger writers. For some rather obscure reason, he has passed almost entirely out of the picture for the past couple of years, and so it is with an unusual degree of interest that his work for the recent Schubert revue, *Hooray for What*, starring Ed Wynn, is given ear to. That he has lost none of his melodic gift is amply demonstrated by *Moanin' In the Mornin'*, one of those melancholic scraps of tune that rather creep up on you unawares and that are extremely difficult to dislodge once they get implanted in your memory. Arlen's lyric-writing collaborator, now as often before, is E. Y. Harburg, who, if not our very finest lyricist, can at least be counted upon to do intelligent, literate and occasionally witty work. Dorsey does a particularly fine job on this pair of A-1 numbers. His arrangements are invariably skillful and appropriate to the type of tune under consideration, and, of course, any record that begins with a trombone chorus by Tommy, as Dorsey's records usually do, already is off to a head start. *Down With Love* is a deceptively simple, quick-tempo number that might conceivably remind you of *My Gal Sal*, but there's more in it than at once meets the ear, and Dorsey does a completely bang-up job on it.

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AAAA—*God's Country*, and *In the Shade of the New Apple Tree*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Victor 25714.

Two more excellent tunes from *Hooray for What*, both quite as good in their way as the above pair and both competently handled by Reisman and his increasingly popular Waldorf-Astoria band. The former is that virtually impossible phenomenon, a really original march-tempo tune, while the latter is an insinuating kind of number that has the rather doubtful blessing of a vocal chorus by the composer himself. This apparently, is just one of those things that even Arlen's best friends won't tell him. Just why as talented a composer as Arlen should be possessed of so uncontrollable an urge to sing vocal choruses I don't know. But anyway, sing them he does, when he is given encouragement, and in this case it's not bad enough seriously to detract from the recording, while certainly not good enough to benefit it. Reisman's orchestration here is suave and songful, properly bumptious and noisy in *God's Country*.

AAAA—*In the Hall of the Mountain King*, and *The Jockey on the Carrousel*. Joe Usifer and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8020.

These are two fantastically amusing and skillful arrangements by one Joe Usifer, whose name, I beg to confess, was entirely unfamiliar to me until now. But if Mr. Usifer has the ability to turn out arrangements as brilliant as these with any degree of frequency his name will not remain unknown for very much longer, that is certain. Utilizing what appears to be about a twenty-piece combination made up obviously of top notchers from the studios, he gives us scintillating and ingenious work that makes use quite freely of orchestral devices conceived by his concert-hall betters. For example, the introduction to *Jockey On the Carrousel* is filched from the opening of Stravinsky's *Fire Bird* and there are other passages that are, to say the least, derivative, but in the main they are amazingly original and place Usifer immediately in the very first rank of our arrangers.

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AAA—*Summertime*, and *I'll See You in My Dreams*. Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra. Victor 25716.

Your correspondent didn't expect to see the day when he would be going out of his way to recommend a Lombardo recording. Ordinarily, Lombardo's work represents everything that he regards as distasteful, from the sugar sweet saxophones, the kindergarten rhythm to the ferociously bad vocals by Brother Carmen. But, in some entirely unaccountable manner, they have contrived a version of the lamented Gershwin's *Summertime* that seems to us extraordinarily effective, the only dance version of this haunting melody that has been in any way worthy of the number. So, credit where credit is due.

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AAA—*Last Night On the Back Porch*, and *The Death of J. B. Markham*. Johnny Mercer and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8011.

On the face of it, you wouldn't imagine why anyone would want to revive a number like *Last Night On the Back Porch*, but wait until you hear what Mercer has done with it. Just as last month he took his own *Bob White*, and in the face of very strenuous competition, proceeded to turn out the best recorded version of the number by the complete originality of his methods, so he has written a whole mess of additional lyrics for this old chestnut, each one of which is a little more astonishing than the preceding one and with the assistance of his band, whomever it may consist of, and, more prominently, his choristers, he makes a mightily amusing record out of it. Whatever you do, don't sell Johnny Mercer short.

Hot Jazz

○ AAAA—*I'm a Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas*, by the Benny Goodman Quartet, and *Where or When*, by the Benny Goodman Trio. Victor 25725.

The contribution by the quartet here is another of those virtuoso exhibitions that are almost beyond belief in their rhythmic integration and their technical perfection. Although this is nominally that bucolic classic, *I'm a Ding Dong Daddy*, it could just as easily be almost anything else for all the attention that is paid here to the tune. It is merely a series of frenzied variations on a harmonic pattern, but it turns out to be one of the most hair-raising

that this group has ever done. This particular recording gives somewhat more prominence than most to Krupa and his diabolic drumming and the wind-up of the disc is almost unbearable in its rhythmic intensity. *Where or When*, by the trio alone on the reverse, is much less satisfactory, it being the kind of tune that doesn't allow of the playing around that a combination like Goodman's invariably subjects it to. All a really superb tune like *Where or When* requires is to be played, simply and with fervor, but when you begin to embroider it even slightly you butcher it unjustifiably, and such is the case here.

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AAA—*The Campbells Are Swinging*, and *Abba Dabba*. Larry Clinton and his Orchestra. Victor 25707.

It was inevitable that in the current Scotch Swing cycle through which we are now passing someone should do *The Campbells Are Coming*. Clinton's version of same is competent, mildly amusing in spots, but entirely lacking in that rather slyly winsome quality that made the Claude Thornhill-Maxine Sullivan *Loch Lomond* the epochal record that it is. *Abba Dabba*, on the reverse, turns out to be a swingie based on the *Danse Arabe* from the *Nut-Cracker Suite*. Here also, one finds a moderate degree of skill but little humor or originality, a characterization which seems to apply with equal pertinence to all of Larry Clinton's work. The band, of course, is thoroughly top-notch and it accordingly rates consideration.

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○ AAA—*Loch Lomond*, and *Camel Hop*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25717.

Goodman does a rather amazing thing in *Loch Lomond*. He uses the now famous Claude Thornhill arrangement and follows it, as nearly as I can make out, note for note, or virtually so. On top of this, his vocalist, Martha Tilton, mirrors the Maxine Sullivan vocal method down to the slightest nuance. So what you have here is Goodman, but not Goodman, if you get what I mean. *Camel Hop*, on the reverse, is another creation of the Mary Lou Williams who has contributed to the Goodman repertoire in the past. It's a grand swing number and Goodman gives a blazing performance of it that only he could do.

OTHER CURRENT POPULAR RECORDS

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*Darling Nellie Grey*, and *The Folks Who Live On the Hill*. Maxine Sullivan, with Orchestra under the direction of Claude Thornhill. Vocalion 3885.

AAA—*The One I Love*, and *Melody Farm*. Rudy Vallee and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-7342.

AAA—*A Foggy Day*, and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*. Bob Crosby and his Orchestra. Decca 1539.

AAA—*Annie Laurie*, and *Frisco Fog*. Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra. Decca 1569.

AAA—*You're My Everything*, and *Hector the Garbage Collector*. Jerry Colonna. Vocalion 3876.

AAA—*Who*, and *Goblins In the Steeple*. Frank Froeba and his Orchestra. Decca 1545.

AA—*My Heaven on Earth*, and *Am I in Another World*. Ted Fio Rito and his Orchestra. Decca 1567.

○ AA—*I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, and *Watching*. Cootie Williams and his Rug Cutters. Vocalion 3890.

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(Eastern Standard Time)

NBC HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY

(Red Network)

Sundays—

10:00 A.M.—The Madrigal Singers with Yella Pessl
9:30 P.M.—American Album of Familiar Music
10:00 P.M.—Rising Musical Star Program

Mondays—

8:30 P.M.—Voice of Firestone

Tuesdays—

2:00 P.M.—Fun in Music
2:30 P.M.—Gen. Fed. of Women's Clubs' Program
7:15 P.M.—Vocal Varieties

Wednesdays—

6:35 P.M.—Joan Edwards, contralto
7:45 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs

Thursdays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC Music Guild

Fridays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC-Music Appreciation Hour
8:00 P.M.—Cities Service Concert
9:00 P.M.—Waltz Time

Saturdays—

7:45 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs
10:00 P.M.—NBC-Symphony Orchestra

(Blue Network)

Sundays—

12:30 P.M.—Radio City Music Hall
2:00 P.M.—RCA Magic Key
5:00 P.M.—Metro. Opera Auditions
7:00 P.M.—Popular Classics

Mondays—

3:00 P.M.—Rochester Civic Orchestra
6:05 P.M.—U. S. Army Band
9:00 P.M.—Philadelphia Orchestra

Tuesdays—

2:30 P.M.—Music Guild
3:00 P.M.—U. S. Marine Band
7:45 P.M.—Vivian Della Chiesa, soprano

Wednesdays—

3:45 P.M.—Metropolitan Opera Guild
9:30 P.M.—NBC-Minstrel Show

Thursdays—

3:15 P.M.—Eastman School of Music Program
8:15 P.M.—The Lieder Singers
9:00 P.M.—Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Fridays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC-Music Appreciation Hour

Saturdays—

2:00 P.M.—Metropolitan Opera Broadcast
6:35 P.M.—Alma Kitchell, songs
9:00 P.M.—National Barn Dance
10:00 P.M.—NBC-Symphony Orchestra

COLUMBIA HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY

Sundays—

12:30 P.M.—Salt Lake City Tabernacle
3:00 P.M.—N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orch.
7:00 P.M.—Jeanette MacDonald
9:00 P.M.—Ford Sunday Hour

Mondays—

3:00 P.M.—Coolidge String Quartet
6:45 P.M.—Hollace Shaw, soprano

Tuesdays—

10:30 P.M.—Del Casino, tenor

Wednesdays—

3:45 P.M.—Curtis Institute of Music
8:30 P.M.—Deanna Durbin — Eddie Cantor
9:00 P.M.—Kostelanetz Orch. with Soloists

Thursdays—

3:30 P.M.—U. S. Army Band

Fridays—

3:00 P.M.—U. S. Marine Band
6:00 P.M.—CBS Children's Concert
7:15 P.M.—Margaret Daum, soprano
8:00 P.M.—Hammerstein's Music Hall
10:00 P.M.—Kitty Carlisle, soprano and Reed Kennedy, baritone

Saturdays—

11:00 A.M.—Cincinnati Cons. of Music
5:45 P.M.—Coolidge String Quartet
7:00 P.M.—Swing Session
7:30 P.M.—Carborundum Band

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